

Museum Silences on Wartime Rape: The Case of the Imperial War Museum

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Abstract

Violence against women in wartime has been documented since Antiquity and remains a constant in armed conflict around the world. Women are the most targeted civilian group and sexual violence is seen as a consistent means to annihilate enemies in conflict. While this topic has been widely researched in law, history and feminist studies, it is understudied within the field of museum studies and virtually invisible in museums. The question remains: what is the attitude of war museums towards the long history of violence against women in wartime?

The aim of this thesis is to investigate museum silences on the topic of wartime rape against women, with a particular focus on war museums. Drawing on recent museum studies work on human rights this thesis argues that war museums, in particular national war museums, have a moral responsibility to engage with this topic to openly discuss and present the atrocities committed against women, especially when wartime rape is considered a crime against humanity by the United Nations.

The case study for this thesis is the Imperial War Museum in London (UK), which covers the history of war from the First World War to the present day. This research uses a qualitative approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex issue of violence against women in conflict zones. Methodologies concerning the investigation of silence in museum contexts have not been widely explored. This research offers a new methodological approach to researching silence, and which factors contribute to it. It brings together visual analysis of the main exhibition spaces and documentary analysis of the archives of past temporary exhibitions to provide the first in-depth investigation of wartime rape in a war museum. The original contribution of this thesis lies both in its in-depth study of museum silences and a novel methodological approach, encouraging museums to reconsider their representation of wartime rape against women. In particular, the role of art as an interpretive strategy is highlighted as a potential approach to engaging with these issues.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.

- Ellie Wiesel

Nobel Peace Prize winner (Nobelprize.org, 1986)

This statement implies that neutrality towards topics related to the field of human rights violations can be regarded as a contribution to injustice. This means that staying silent about any kind of atrocity against any groups or individuals helps the continuity of these violent actions. The issue of human rights does not represent the same meaning for many people, but instead, could become a matter of dispute, controversy and disagreement (Sandell, 2017, p.136). However, the universal agreements and conventions on supporting human rights exist, these rights are to some extent still violated causing suffering for many people around the world (ibid, 2017, p.136). The best way to understand what human rights means is through an individual's life experience, where some people enjoy full rights, and others suffer continues violation of their rights (Sandell, 2017, p.137). The attempt to secure human rights is usually associated with counter resistance by opposition who are keen sustain the 'status quo' (Sandell, 2017, p.137). Regarding the implications of the museum's moral and political narratives that are offered for audiences, Sandell (2017, p.139) argues that visitors are typically connecting what they see at exhibitions with their prior knowledge which is constituted by different events and news in their surrounding environment apart from the museum. Therefore, museums should not constrain themselves with traditional narratives of 'art history, history, anthropology and so on' (Sandell, 2017, p.140). Instead, they should embrace their responsibilities with that associated with their influential position, creating narratives that deal with contemporary issues and engaging people on the political and social level (Sandell, 2017, p.140-142).

Regarding neutrality in the museum context, David Fleming, the Director of National Museums Liverpool, and the Founding President of the Federation of International

Human Rights Museums (2016, p.74) asserts that every museum message is a product of continuous effort by its employees with the aim to produce a neutral perspective of world events. However, it is impossible for museums to be neutral because everything on display is based on a curatorial decision. Thus, these decisions represent a perspective or opinion that can be easily opposed or challenged, which denies the claims for neutrality. Even the mere process of selecting objects for display to convey particular meanings implies that other perspectives have been excluded (ibid, 2016, p.74). In this sense, all museums can be regarded as biased and political, even if they claim the opposite (Fleming, 2016, p.75). Therefore, discussing a topic such as wartime rape against women is ethically crucial because it involves human rights violations in conflict zones. However, it is not explicitly represented in museums. For reasons might be related to the notion that its representation in museums depends on curatorial decisions, which is inevitably bias and political (Fleming, 2016, p.75).

Yet , there is no neutral museum., because all museums are, to some extent, biased and, as a consequence, its messages are based on the world view of those who runs it (Fleming, 2016, p.75). Liverpool International Slavery Museum (ISM) which is campaigning against 'racism and discrimination' and defending human rights has declared that its messages are based on the world view of those who runs it (Fleming, 2016, p.75). The claims of neutrality imply that those who work in museums deny any involvement of outsider groups in their decisions, such as business interests or elected politicians. But, they neglect the fact that they are constituting a controlling group who decide what museums have to present or not (Fleming 2016, p.75). Fleming (2016, p.75) stresses that museum staff should not shy away from controversy by trying to find a 'neutral ground' because this will only help in making the perpetrators equivalent to victims in terms of empathy. Therefore, the museum should take a clear standpoint, and express their social and political responsibility in condemning the violations of human rights in any circumstance.

1.1 The importance of tackling the topic of wartime rape in museums (the topic background)

Rape in war has a negative impact on all societies and individuals, especially women, which is why it is considered a crime against humanity. According to the United Nations (UN, 2018), the allied governments which included France, Britain and Russia were the first ones to use the term 'crimes against humanity' to condemn the mass killings committed by the Ottoman Empire in 1915 against the Armenians. At the end of World War II in 1945 the allies conducted the first war crimes lawsuits (UN, 2018; Heineman, 2011, p.1). Although sexual violence against women had been condemned since the beginning of the 20th century, it was only after the systemic rape and genocide in both former Yugoslavia and Rwanda in the 1990s that the world and the international community started to pay attention to the horrific situation that surrounded civilians in conflict zones. As a result, a convention that took a stand against wartime rape through the courts of the United Nations was established (Heineman, 2011, p.1). The international community agreed in 1998 on the Rome Statute document which listed a fixed set of actions that could form a crime. For instance, Article 7 indicates that 'rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence' are considered as a crime against humanity (UN, 2018). It might be useful to clarify that the term 'sexual violence' does not only mean 'rape' but encompasses the meanings of all the terms above (in Article 7), and the victim could be from any gender (man or woman) at any age (Heineman, 2011: 2).

The need to put a definition for 'rape' and 'sexual violence' reflects condemnations of this act in all societies and the intentions to end it legally through forming laws to punish the perpetrators; it also shows that sexual violence against women in the times of war and peace are prevalent in all countries and civilizations (Eriksson, 2011, p.3). Laws in different countries around the world have mainly defined rape as 'forced vaginal penetration committed by a man against a woman' (McMahon and Clay-Warner, 2008, p.573). The earliest occurrence of a definition of rape was found between 1154 and 1189 in the English common law, in the era of Henry II, and defined it as 'sexual intercourse' committed by a man 'on a woman who is not his wife' (ibid, 2008, p.573). By emphasizing the perpetrator's

gender, with men mainly blamed for this kind of action in all definitions, women are usually considered the victims (McMahon and Clay-Warner, 2008, p.573). Feminists in the USA have sought to reform the definition of rape since the 1960s because it has some limitations, it overlooks other forms of rape such as 'forced oral or anal sex, spousal rape, male rape, or same sex rape' (McMahon and Clay-Warner, 2008, p.573-574). A similar reform movement was established in the UK which helped to adjust the law and developed the definition to encompass 'forced vaginal or anal penetration by either a male or a female', and following that, feminist movements around the world have also sought to modify rape laws. The feminist effort has exceeded the law reformation in changing the social perceptions and stereotypes that surrounded rape victims, for example, claims that women's clothes are seditious, that when women say 'no' it means 'yes', and the accusation that women are usually lying in rape reports. They have invited changes to these stereotypes through various educational programmes that targeted both males and females, starting from primary schools all the way to universities (McMahon and Clay-Warner, 2008, p.574-575). Despite all these efforts to eliminate rape in peace and war, this violent action against women is still widely practiced globally, posing a great challenge to the UN and obstructing their attempts to stop sexual violence against women in armed conflict (Eriksson, 2011, p.3, Copelon, 2011, p.232, McMahon and Clay-Warner, 2008, p.576).

The act of wartime rape against women is common in was from ancient times to the present day (Brownmiller, 1975, p.31-48). Ending violence against women poses a great challenge to the UN due to the prevalence of rape in times of peace and war, in all countries and civilizations (Eriksson, 2011, p.3). The United Nations have considered the sexual violence in armed conflict as the 'greatest silence' in history (Eriksson, 2011, p.3). Therefore, ending this act of violence has become a priority for the organization and part of its mission is to end that silence. Myths that emphasize notions such as the inevitability of wartime rape as a consequence of war, or, its consideration as cultural traditions rather than a crime or discrimination against women, should be exposed (Eriksson, 2011, p.3). The continued repetition of these myths can reduce the gravity of this crime, and consequently, its spread in conflict zones will not be acknowledged (Eriksson, 2011, p.3). Sexual violence against women in peace and war is a universal crime (Eriksson, 2011, p.5) and in times of

war, it is usually used as a tactic, or as a weapon against civilians. It is increasingly and continuously reflecting the nature of armed conflict. These atrocities happen especially in the most populated areas where soldiers deliberately target civilian women. This act is evident in war, for instance, during the Bosnian and Rwandan wars in the 1990s, where a large number of women brutally suffered from systematic sexual violence (60,000 women in Bosnia, and 500,000 women in Rwanda) (Eriksson, 2011, p.5). More details about the impact of sexual violence on victims and its use as a weapon of war are discussed in Chapter 2. This topic is related to human rights violations in conflict zones, and, due to the prevalence of rape as a weapon of war, it is worth being discussed in cultural institutions, such as museums, in order to contribute to ending silence on wartime rape. It is especially crucial with raising concerns of human rights being discussed in the museum sector.

1.2 Research context

This research is situated within the museum study literature that relates to morality and human rights, which is widely covered by scholars such as Richard Sandell, David Fleming, Susan Optow, and Louise Purbrick. It is also related to the discourse of difficult history and war museums which has been discussed by many scholars such as Ana Carden-Coyne, Jay Winter, Sharon Macdonald and others. The research also looked at how feminists such as Merete Ipsen approach the topic of sexual violence against women. Researching silences in museums is particularly challenging because there is very little scholarly work on how to do research in this area. This thesis attempts to accomplish this difficult work and to contribute to the field through researching silences at the Imperial War Museum in London (UK). Therefore, researching silences in the context of museums is innovative and experimental.

Methodologies concerning the investigation of silence in a museum context has not been widely explored. This research offers a new methodological approach to researching silence, and, which factors contribute to it. It brings together visual analysis of the main exhibition spaces and documentary analysis of the archives of past temporary exhibitions to provide the first in-depth investigation of wartime rape in a war museum. The original

contribution of this thesis lies both in its in-depth study of museum silences and a novel methodological approach, encouraging museums to reconsider their representation of wartime rape against women. In particular, the role of art as an interpretive strategy is highlighted as a potential approach to engaging with these issues.

It is worth noting that I faced difficulties when I tried to contact museum professionals to conduct interviews regarding the research topics. The greater majority did not respond to my emails. Given the sensitivity of this topic this might explain the reason why people do not want to talk about it.

1.3 Aims and objectives

This thesis aims to investigate silences on the topic of wartime rape at the Imperial War Museum in London, UK (IWM). It explores to what extent national war museums, who are concerned with memory of wars, have engaged with this topic. In doing so, this research aims to:

- 1- Provide a wide-ranging understanding of the reasons why the topic of wartime rape should be discussed in museums.
- 2- Understand the importance of representing the historical truth from different perspectives.
- 3- Explore how museums have dealt with difficult and controversial topics.
- 4- Explore the war museums approaches in representing war history.
- 5- Explore how wartime rape can be highlighted when talking about the history of war.
- 6- Employ the methodology to investigate silences in the permanent and temporary exhibitions at the IWM.
- 7- Conduct in-depth visual analysis of the permanent and temporary exhibitions at the IWM to highlight the silences on the research topic.
- 8- Provide in-depth analysis of the potential reasons that lead to the museum silence on wartime rape.

This research project will contribute to revealing the silences regarding the representation of wartime rape at the IWM. The research objectives will answer questions related to museum transparency in covering the topic of war from different angles, arguing that wartime rape is common practice in all wars when circumstances permit and impacts negatively on women and defeated societies in war zones, violating all international conventions on human rights. Therefore, museums dealing with war history and human rights have a moral responsibility to highlight atrocities against women and other civilians. As argued by Sandell (2016: 135) museums have gained a unique position in the public domain due to their contributions in constituting the ‘moral and political’ atmosphere in which human rights are defended and appreciated. Therefore, museums have to rise to this challenge and take their part in the transformation of society by encouraging thoughts and ideas to explore possible solution to conflicts.

1.4 Research questions

This research aims to understand the reasons that might lead to museums’ silence on the topic of wartime rape. First, it will begin by making a clear argument that wartime rape is an important topic to be presented in museums as part of war history, since sexual violence against women has been practiced as a weapon of war. Then, the research will focus on a number of research questions:

- 1- Why do war museums not discuss this topic explicitly in their exhibitions?
- 2-Through careful analysis of the IWM permanent galleries this research will focus on:
How do war museums silence wartime rape in their permanent displays?
- 3-To what extent were IWM able to discuss this topic?
- 4-What other spaces, forms or medium are used by the museum to engage with this topic?
In particular, it will highlight the differences between permanent exhibitions and temporary exhibitions and events at the IWM in terms of highlighting war atrocities against women
- 5-Additionally, the research explores a methodological question: How can we research silences around this topic in the museum?

1.5 Motivation for researching wartime rape

What motivated me to think about this topic was a painting by the well-known reconstructive surgeon and Iraqi artist, Professor Ala Bashir. The painting was exhibited in the Qatar Museum of Modern Art in 2014. It depicts a woman's head inside a plastic bag placed on a chair and surrounded by soldiers wearing a military medal (Figure 1.1).



Figure 1.1 Painting by Ala Bashir, Qatar Museum of Modern Art 2014. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2014).

This painting, in my opinion, was very powerful in portraying atrocities against women in wartime, showing the vulnerability of a civilian woman facing the brutality of soldiers. This painting depicted the soldiers as brutal non-human figures which implies that their violent behaviour against the woman in the picture is not related to values of humanity. At this point, I started to think of war beyond the political tensions between two armies fighting over land or mineral resources. Wars also involve atrocities against civilians. During this period, in 2014, the news channels were occupied with the story of the abduction of more than 200 Nigerian girls from a boarding school by the militant group Boko Haram (see BBC News, 2015), many of whom were sexually abused and forced into marriage. The

same thing was happening, but on a larger scale in the Syrian civil war, where the sexual violence against women was widely practised (Aljazeera News, 2018). This made me think about one of the most famous incidents of wartime rape, that committed by the Japanese Imperial Army in the colonised territory during the Second World War, known as ‘comfort women’, as well as the systematic rape against Bosnian and Rwandan women in the 1990s. The first question that came to mind was: why have museums not discussed this topic? And is it possible to exhibit artworks concerning sexual violence against women in museums? Especially when wartime rape is acknowledged and condemned by the UN. This encouraged me to consider doing a PhD focusing on wartime rape in a museum context and to explore the potential of representing this topic in museums (particularly as I have never seen any museum exhibiting this topic). When I started my research in 2016, I had the chance to speak with the artist (Ala Bashir) of the painting above. I went to his exhibition at the Nottingham Society of Artists which took place between 27 September and 2 October 2016. It was entitled ‘*Agony of memory*’ and the artworks in his solo exhibition were concerned with human suffering. Remarkably, one of the paintings named ‘*Raped*’ explored the feeling of the pain and suffering of victims of sexual violence, as stated by Bashir (2016) (see Figure 1.2). At this stage, I was convinced that this kind of art is a powerful tool in conveying human suffering in armed conflict, especially if it is exhibited in museums to invoke the demands for human rights protection for women in conflict zones. Regarding the importance of artworks in reflecting human suffering, in an interview with Bashir (2016) he states that ‘art is not for entertainment; but instead it ought to provoke the mind, and stir thought, to contemplate the meaning and purpose of our human existence. The art can and does play an important role in transforming humanity for the better’. This statement implies that artworks could be employed to explore topics related to the human experience, especially those that involve difficult situations.



Figure 1.2 'Raped' painting by Ala Bashir, Nottingham Society of Artists 2016. Author (Almisnad, 2016).

1.6 The case of the Imperial War Museum, London (IWM)

Thinking about which museum would be most appropriate to discuss sexual violence in conflict zones, the best choice was war museums because they cover the history of war and conflict, where sexual violence against women are widely practiced. The IWM in London is one of the most prominent museums in the UK that deals with the history of war. The

number of visitors to all IWM branches reached more than 2.4 million a year according to their Annual Report and Account (2017). It covers the history of war starting from WWI to the present day. This museum has six permanent exhibitions, and one space allocated for temporary exhibitions.

Permanent exhibitions in this museum predominantly emphasized the concepts of heroism, patriotism, soldiers' suffering and sacrifices, political power, and technological developments of weapons, reflecting the stories of those who took part in war efforts. Within this orientation, I researched silences on the topic of wartime rape, applying a method that involved thick visual analysis of the museum's permanent exhibitions. However, while the museum focuses on the stories related to the war effort, it does deal with the difficult history of the Holocaust in a fairly horrific manner. This exhibition theme might be considered a more accepted type of museum performance and exhibition type not least because the scale of the genocide cannot be ignored, and indeed, constituted a crucial part of the history of WWII.

Regarding the research topic, the issue of wartime rape was completely silenced in all of its permanent exhibitions, for different reasons (see Chapter 5). As there are not any examples at IWM permanent exhibitions dealing with the violence against women. In contrast, regarding their temporary exhibitions, it was clear that the museum was approaching the topic of war differently, concentrating on the stories related to the impact of war on victims and survivors. By applying critical approaches towards war from the perspective of the commissioned war artists, these exhibitions reveal the museum's willingness to break its silence regarding war atrocities against civilians. However, wartime rape was rarely explored in these exhibitions.

1.7 Thesis structure

Chapter 2 A weapon of war

Building on examples from both historical and contemporary war, starting from the beginning of the 20th century onwards, this chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the prevalence of wartime rape. The reason I focus on 20th and 21st century warfare is

because these wars are well documented, and some survivors and witnesses are still alive. Also, most of these wars form the skeleton of the Imperial War Museum's permanent exhibitions which is the main case study of this research. This chapter analyses the prevalence of sexual violence against women and girls in conflict zones looking at its historical roots, women's position within societies, the impact of wartime rape on victims and defeated societies, and the reactions of the United Nations (UN) and the international law towards this issue. This thorough review helps understand why civilian women are targeted in conflict environments, where rape is considered as a weapon of war, and why it should be condemned by all societies in every possible way. In turn, this comprehensive review highlights the paramount importance of this subject and the need for it to be addressed in cultural institutions such as museums. Therefore, this chapter draws on the existing literature on wartime sexual violence against civilian women, mapping the history of this practice in ancient and contemporary wars, looking at the role of the UN and the international law in combating this phenomenon or practice, and to what extent they have succeeded in doing so. This chapter begins by exploring women's subordinate position in social life, offering an important link between the ways in which societies have perceived women, and the use of rape as a weapon of war in conflict zones. This perhaps could explain the prevalence of this act whenever war occurs. This chapter is important in emphasising that sexual violence against civilian women is a crucial element of any war, and it should be taken into account when representing wars or conflict history in museums.

Chapter 3 Museum's response to difficult topics

Museums have demonstrated, on a number of occasions, that they are capable of tackling difficult topics, such as the Holocaust and slavery (Duffy, 2001, p. 10). Therefore, a subject like rape in conflict zones could also be addressed in museums, as this thesis aims to argue. Tackling this topic in museums might not stop the rape of women during conflict, but it could at least raise awareness among the general population and be a witness to these crimes. It could also help to contribute towards a better understanding of human rights and result in a wider condemnation of sexual crimes against women and allow the voices of

victims to be heard. In turn, this could put pressure on politicians and governments to act and help put an end to such crimes. Certainly, the absence of representation in museums is an issue worthy of research. What might drive such reticence? Museums are regarded as places where new ideas can be explored (Fleming, 2012, p. 252) and are therefore in a unique position to address human rights issues, such as the negative impact of wars on civilians, including the long history of wartime rape. In the first part, this chapter will focus on the concept of historical truth in a museum context. Since wartime rape is considered a part of the consequence of war, it also can be seen as a true part of war history. Thus, this topic should be highlighted when talking about or exhibiting history of war history in museums to provide a holistic understanding of that topic from different angles. So, looking at the concept of historical truth in museums could help in understanding the reasons why some topics are highlighted whilst others are silenced. This chapter will explore the museum study narratives on human rights, as the topic of wartime rape is related to human rights violations. I attempt to highlight the museum's moral role in covering such a topic. Then, this chapter will discuss exhibitions representing difficult topics and difficulties that might emerge from these kinds of representation, and, how museums dealt with such controversy. The final section considers feminist perspectives on war museums.

Chapter 4 Methodology (Researching silences)

Methodologies investigating silences regarding wartime rape in museums are not readily explored in academic research. The main goal of this research is to gain an understanding of museum silence on the topic of wartime rape against women. The research uses a qualitative approach to help provide a comprehensive understanding of this complex issue of violence against women in conflict zones and its lack of representation in a museum setting. Mason (2002, p. 3) emphasizes that 'qualitative research aims to produce rounded and contextual understanding on the basis of rich, nuanced and detailed data'. A qualitative methodology is valuable for this type of research because of its capacity to engage the reader with detailed aspects of the social world: qualitative methods help adequately portray its multi-dimensional facets (Mason, 2002, p. 1). Mason (2002, p. 1) also notes that

the qualitative approach uses ‘methodologies that celebrate richness, depth, nuance, context, multi-dimensionality and complexity’. Data gathering for the case study and throughout the research will employ multiple methods, such as observation and document or desk-based research, archival research, online collections, press and a small number of interviews. I used the Mason and Sayner paper (2019) as a guide for researching silences at the IWM as they presented nine ways to understand how different forms of silence can be generated in museums. I started my investigation by applying a thick visual analysis method at both permanent and temporary exhibitions at the IWM. I investigate each exhibition at the IWM separately, starting with the WWI exhibition on the ground floor and ending with the ‘Lord Ashcroft Gallery’ on the 5th floor. In each gallery, I started by mapping the main themes, taking photographs of all displays and labels. Later, I categorised each exhibition in to separate tables where each table looks into the main themes, the main concept of each theme, interpretation elements, women’s representation, if any, and the representation of wartime rape. That allowed me to trace the pattern and approaches that the museum takes in representing war.

At the next stage of collecting data I examined the exhibition archive to explore to what extent the museum has engaged with wartime rape. I focused on exhibitions starting from the 1990s to the present day. This timeline was deliberately chosen because wartime rape was acknowledged as a crime against humanity by the United Nations at this period due to the genocidal wars of Bosnia and Rwanda. I also explored the museum’s website searching for materials related to wartime rape and attended some events organised by the museum (on issues of war) in order to understand the ways in which the museum dealt with different aspects of war. During the fieldwork period I covered all the temporary exhibitions between May 2017 and December 2018 to investigate the differences between temporary and permanent exhibitions in tackling issues of war. In addition, I draw my analysis of the research findings on museum study literature focusing on war museums and difficult topic exhibitions.

Chapter 5 The silence within the museum

This chapter covers the permanent exhibitions at the IWM from WWI to the present day, investigating the representation and silencing of the topic of wartime rape, and the ways in which these exhibitions represent women in their display. The chapter provides comprehensive observation of all permanent galleries by examining at the themes on display and the ways in which they represented war. In each theme, I compared the representations of women to men, and to what extent wartime was discussed. This chapter argues that the topic of sexual violence against women is silenced in the museum's permanent exhibitions. For instance, most of the space was dedicated to exploring soldiers' heroism, sacrifice, suffering, patriotism, the continuous advancement in weapons technology and politics of war. It is noteworthy therefore that the exhibition space for women's stories of war is much smaller. Women were predominantly portrayed as supporters, patriotic, achievers and in some cases as sacrifices.

However, WWII witnessed widespread sexual violence against women in territories invaded by the Japanese Army (most pointedly the case of 'comfort women'). Yet this incident was not mentioned anywhere in the WWII gallery. Instead, the gallery concentrated on stories related to the advancement and development of weapons, battlefields, sacrifice and victory. What was particularly striking is that the displays of the Bosnian war completely ignored the systematic sexual violence against women, which was a hallmark of that war. It was perceptible that the impact of war on civilians was not the key concern of the permanent exhibitions. These silences on the topic of wartime rape might be due multiple factors, for instance, space limitations, the type of objects displayed, concern about the sensitivity of the topic and curatorial choices. It can be said that the purpose and function of the galleries was to honour men and women who endured the war; thus, the focus on topics around weapons and battlefields are apparent whereas exhibition space for the history of anti-war movements was noticeably lesser (Winter, 2012, p.152). War museums also have undeclared rules of representation priorities, in which they exclude the horrific images of casualties, keeping only scenes of unbroken bodies. This approach of war representation is especially common in museums dealing with both WWI and WWII. In these exhibitions, a variety of weapons is usually the centrepiece of the display attracting a large number of visitors, in particular school children (Winter, 2012, p.153-154). This is

more likely reflecting the IWM approach in representing the wars at its permanent exhibitions (more details in chapter 5).

Chapter 6 Breaking the silence

This chapter examines the temporary exhibitions at the IWM. These exhibitions were primarily exhibiting artworks created by commissioned war artists. Therefore, the artworks reflected the artists perspectives on war. Thus, the artworks did focus on the devastating impacts on civilians during war and presenting in-depth stories of war survivors. This chapter outlines five temporary exhibitions that took place during the fieldwork period. In addition, this chapter also examines the museum's exhibition archive from the 1990s onwards. The purpose was to investigate to what extent the museum actively considered this topic during that period, given that sexual violence against women was declared a crime against humanity by the UN (following the genocidal wars of both Rwanda and Bosnia). Interestingly, the temporary exhibitions adopted a completely different approach from the permanent galleries. This was accomplished by showing a critical viewpoint of the impact of war on civilians through artists perspectives. These exhibitions have broken the silences over the civilian's experience in conflict zones. The exhibition archive revealed that the topic of wartime rape was rarely discussed, and, at some points, caused controversies regarding the evidence of its occurrence.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

The conclusion will provide a detailed discussion analysing the research findings which attempts to answer the research questions. Thus, I argue that the topic of wartime rape is overlooked in war museums, especially in its permanent exhibitions. This was manifest through silences at the IWM. Thus, the permanent exhibitions predominantly focus on concepts related to patriotism, heroism, sacrifice, weapons technology and politics, whereas issues related to atrocities against women and civilians are rarely discussed or presented. As a result, the permanent exhibitions were to some extent neglecting the stories of war

victims. On the other hand, the temporary exhibitions at the same museum proved to have a completely different approach regarding the representation of war. These temporary exhibitions were chiefly looking at the impact of war on civilians, through artworks by commissioned war artists. This research project argues that museums have a moral role in tackling the topics related to human rights violation in war with a need to focus on wartime rape against women. The conclusion sets out some of the wider implications of this research for museum theory and practice. Finally, it will show the ways in which other museums and human rights organisations could exhibit the topic of rape using different approaches to tackle this subject.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review: Sexual Violence Against Women in Conflict Zones

From prehistoric times to the present, I believe, rape has played a critical function. It is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear.

Susan Brownmiller, Against Our Will (1975, p.15)

It is fair for women to ask why violence against them is still ongoing, and has existed since the beginning of history, despite the scientific, technical and cultural advancements mankind has witnessed. At a time when human rights and women's rights are widely recognised and discussed at national, international, educational, scholarly and media levels, sexual abuse against women is still practiced in conflict and non-conflict situations. The importance of this subject lies in its continuity despite all the efforts to stop it. Currently, human rights, especially those that involve women, are still violated by men, usually those in situations of power. This chapter explores the situatedness of rape and the underlying power relations that have been used to justify its practice through time. This chapter will provide an understanding of the importance of this topic to be recognised in museums, especially those concerning the history of war. The statement above implies that sexual violence against women is common practice in all wars. Nonetheless, this topic is still silent in museums. This chapter surveys the scholarly literature of feminism, sociology and law in order to provide an understanding of the reasons that led to such aggressions against women in war zones. This chapter analyses women's position within society, the prevalence of sexual violence against women and girls in conflict zones, looking at its historical roots, the impact of wartime rape on victims and defeated societies, and the reactions of the United Nations (UN) and the international law towards this issue. This chapter argues that wartime rape is prevalent in wars which directly impacts women and society. Thus, museums have a moral duty to highlight this neglected and significant topic.

The reason I stress the role of cultural institutions – and especially museums – in presenting this continuing humanitarian tragedy (women suffering during conflict) is because museums are now playing an important role in society as cultural institutions. Their influential role in transforming society for a better future for humanity has been fully explored by academic scholars and museum professionals such as Richard Sandell and David Fleming. Considering the evolving role of museums both internationally and locally, Fleming (2012, p.252) and Carvill (2010, p.1) indicate that these institutions are exceeding their traditional role as places of preserving, displaying and documenting collections and now play a more profound and meaningful role. Museums have become increasingly involved with social issues such as equality and justice. Many contemporary museums present themselves “as agents of social change” and openly declare their aims to reinforce cultural coexistence and address social inequality (Sandell, 2006, p.2). Sandell (2006, p.6) stresses that global political orientations may have influenced the shift in the role of museums towards their focus on social equality and human rights. For instance, by responding to political and social demands, museums have addressed subjects such as war and genocide and other human rights-related topics since the 1980s and have thus provided knowledge and encouraged social activism (Carter and Orange, 2012, p.111). It can be understood that museums now have a moral obligation towards humanitarian issues, to increase awareness amongst the population and to contribute in condemning all kinds of atrocities against vulnerable people. The role of museums in advocating human rights is fully discussed in Chapter 3.

Seifert noted: ‘Wars, violent conflicts between people, as well as sexual attacks on women, are historical and social processes that are carried out collectively and, thus, must have a collective meaning’ (1996, p.36). The next section considers women’s status in society to try to understand why women are the most targeted population in war zones.

2.1 Women in social context

This section explores the position of women in societies, with the aim of understanding the elements that might lead to wartime rape where women and young girls are most likely to be targeted. When women discuss their position in society, terms such as ‘inequality’,

‘oppression’ and ‘subordination’ often emerge to describe their status and experiences (Phillips, 1987, p.1). Inequality implies a situation whereby men enjoy more rights and power than women within the same society (Phillips, 1987, p.1). Oppression indicates that women are abused and governed by ideology, politics, social tradition and economic situations which limit their role (Phillips, 1987, p.1, and Oxford English Dictionary, 2006, p.711).

Claims were made by Greek philosopher Aristotle that women by nature are less than men in all aspects, ‘physically, mentally and socially’ (Peradotto and Sullivan, 1984, p.3). These kinds of claims might find a wide acceptance in that period, but also in subsequent ones. In many contemporary cultures the consideration of a woman as less important than a man still exists, such as in the Middle East (El Feki, 2013). With the differences from one culture to another and from one historical period to another within the same culture, the woman is usually recognised as a secondary component in society and must be subordinate to men (Ortner, 1972: p.5).

The subordinate position of women appears first in its etymology. ‘The Oxford English Dictionary (2006, p.617, 1194) defines man as *‘adult human male’* and woman as *‘adult human female’*. They are equally human adults, but they are differing in sex. The interesting element is the origin of the term ‘woman’ in the English language as it is explained in the same dictionary: woman is a word derived from two other words, ‘wife’ and ‘man’. So, naming the woman using these two terms might situate her in a lesser position than the man, as she might be regarded as subordinate to the man, since she is no more than the wife of a man. Moreover, some expressions in the English language have been considered as discriminatory on the basis of sex. For example, using the word ‘man’ or humankind when referring to ‘human beings’ or using the words ‘policeman and fireman’ instead of ‘police officer or firefighter’ (Oxford English Dictionary, 2006, p.617, 618). This explanation cannot be applied to the term ‘woman’ in other languages, as the word can be different from one language to another.

Looking at the status of women in ancient societies might provide a better understanding of their situation today and to explain why civilian women are targeted in war and conflict zones. The discrimination against women is rooted deeply in old

civilizations such as Greece and Rome (Peradotto and Sullivan, 1984, p.1). The Greek myths depicted women as 'evil, powerful, uncontrollable' and harmful to men (Peradotto and Sullivan, 1984, p.2). In the Assyrian period (900 to 600 BC), women were very limited socially and politically, while men had full advantage in society (Rollin, 1993, p.44). Ruth Padel (1993, p.3) investigated the position of women in the 5th century BC in Athenian society, to provide an understanding of the ways in which men thought about women and what kind of processes men used to control women. In that period, men believed that women were the most likely to be possessed by demons. Indeed, this fantasy was the most dominating idea about women as the Athenians presumed that women consisted of 'inner space and inner darkness'. This, ultimately, may together affect men's mental health, or the world's order (Padel, 1993, p.3). Consequently, all demons that might harm men were depicted as female characters in the Greek myths (Padel, 1993: p.4). In Athenian community, women were treated as the property of men (father or husband), since they 'had no control over their own marriages, properties' or destiny (Padel, 1993, p.4).

A parallel can be made with contemporary society. For example, in Yemen, forced marriage of women or young girls is common as the father figure commands the family. Therefore, he is the only one who can decide the fate of a daughter (Ghanim, 2009, p.28). The reason for early marriage in the Middle East, which is considered now a 'common form of sexual violence', is to guarantee that girls do not lose their virginity before marriage, so the honour of the family men is protected (Ghanim, 2009, p.28). Women are mostly monitored and restricted by their male family members or relatives, as the honour of men is 'located' on the women (Smith, 2008, p.597). That could be one of the reasons for rape in conflict, as a means of taking revenge for other men's honour. Also, it seems that fear of women is controlling men's attitudes which results in the constant suppression of women from ancient history to the present day. Considering the evidence above, one can ask: are these attitudes inherited from one generation to another? Or is it merely a fear of women gaining a better economic status or political power in society which could make them strong competitors? Padel (1993, p.5) explains that when a group gains power, it cannot be easily waived, as the ones with power tend to rule or dominate. For example, when the Athenian men gained control over the Spartans, this situation is reflected in their

attitude towards women as 'self-opposed' to man: 'Men who do not go out to control other people, as the Athenians do, are naturally perceived as weaker, and less controlling, than women (Padel, 1993, p.5). It is worth noting that talking about these issues is not aimed at demonising men, but rather to understand the social environment that impacts women.

In addition, men from different cultures and religions have developed a fear of being polluted by women's bodies. Indeed, in some religious texts, sexual relationships are considered contaminating to people, thus women are considered as a source of pollution, while men are pure (Smith, 2008, p.595). The same concept existed in the ancient Athenian culture that looked to the biological aspects of women as polluting factors, which could affect the purity of men (Padel, 1993, p.5). For example, touching women during their menstruation or after conceiving a child is prohibited in many cultures, such as ancient Greece, ancient Tamil, Hindus, and medieval European cultures, because of their polluting effect on men who cannot enter a temple or conduct a prayer until they purify themselves, by taking a bath and wearing another cloth (Padel, 1993, p.5, 6, Smith, 2008, p.595). Moreover, women are still prevented from entering sacred places during their monthly periods in many contemporary cultures, which continues to lead to an isolating attitude towards women (Smith, 2008, p.595). Historically, in ancient Greece, because of the belief that women have a special sexual power, men fear that sexual relationships with a woman might make them lose their masculinity. As a result, some men took advantage of such beliefs to control women (Smith, 2008, p.595). These beliefs emphasise the importance of the man's wellbeing, his masculinity and strength in societies to the detriment of women, who are restricted by social regulations which favour the man's interests. From these varied examples, it could be said that the present attitudes towards women, such as gender inequality, sexual discrimination, suppression, sexual violence, forced marriage and circumcision, are deeply rooted in the ancient past, and were transmitted from one generation to another.

The role of women in claiming their rights is crucial as they can play an important role in expressing their social problems. It is important to highlight that violence against women occurs even in the most advanced countries where there is gender equality and human rights, such as Scandinavia. For example, in Norway more than 10,000 women

suffer from domestic violence annually, and in Sweden 16 women get killed every year by their partners, mostly as a result of being beaten to death (Ghanim, 2009, p.23, MacKinnon 2006, p.22). Disturbingly, 44% of American women are exposed to victims of rape ; this rate increases with women of colour (MacKinnon, 2006, p.22). However, it is worth highlighting that more women are reporting this kind of violence which would consequently explain the rate of increase in recent years (MacKinnon, 2006, p.22). MacKinnon (2006, p.22) argues that the woman is still considered a man's property, in many cultures including Japan, where her existence is associated with satisfying a man's sexual needs, which in turns asks questions about the boundary between sexual practices and rape. The Oxford dictionary (2006, p.847) defines 'rape' as a crime, typically committed by a man, of forcing another person to have sexual intercourse with the offender against their will. The above quantitative data raises questions about the social position of women: is there a direct link between the social position of women and the violence against them?

2.2 Wartime rape

Regarding wartime rape, civilian women are the most targeted population (Amnesty, 2008: 7), and how have governments, the United Nations, and cultural institutions (such as museums) dealt with this issue? In terms of politics, Pankhurst (2003, p.155) notes that despite politicians saying they want to improve the situation of women in wartime and in the aftermath, women's position has not changed because they have been excluded from decision-making processes 'during peace settlements'. Therefore, it can be argued that the political marginalisation of women reflects their social position in peace time as well as during war, leaving them vulnerable to all kinds of abuses.

In addressing the subject of rape of women during war and conflict, it is important to distinguish wartime rape and rape in peacetime. Wartime rape is characterized by the increased rate of rape by soldiers during war, whereas peacetime rape has a lower rate (Gottschall, 2004, p.129). Heineman (2011, p.2) suggests that sexual violence in peace time as well as wartime should be equally rejected by 'feminist and human rights advocates', because both share the same features. According to Heineman, a 'conflict zone' commonly

describes a situation in which armed forces (governmental or non-governmental) are predominant, even if a state of war has not been declared (Heineman, 2011, p.2). She adds that it is characterised by an atmosphere of intense fear and mass violence affecting only one of the parties to a conflict as a conflict zone. Indeed, the very existence of armed military personnel without any obvious signs of violence to those outside the conflict zone can create this situation (Heineman, 2011, p.2). For example, the presence of American military forces in Okinawa, Japan during peacetime (1995), provoked demonstrations against US forces due to the rape of a 12-year-old Japanese girl by three US soldiers (Sieg, 2008, BBC News, 2013, Chanlett-Avery and Rinehart, 2016, p.7).

2.3 Women in war environment

Museums have moved towards directions that are more concerned with raising critical questions about different social matters that impact people's lives. This will be fully discussed in the next chapter. If that is the case then analysing controversial topics such as women suffering in war contexts as part of war history and reality should be one of their priorities, as this research will aim to prove. Women often become military targets, as explained by feminist scholars such as Susan Brownmiller, Ruth Seifert and others. Feminist scholars and women's movements first placed the spotlight on the issue of wartime rape and have since led the way on highlighting this difficult topic (Littlewood, 1997, p.8, Gottschall, 2004, p.130). For example, Brownmiller was the first to explore the issue of mass rape during war and armed conflict since the 1970s. In her book, *Against Our Will*, she explored in depth all aspects of sexual violence against women especially in a war context. She set the foundation for other scholars to further investigate this issue. Feminists have begun to focus on the topic of mass rape in order to deliver a political justification that could provide solutions for an unwanted pregnancy. For example, since the war in Bangladesh in the 1970s the acceptance of abortion was accepted (Brownmiller, 1975, p.78, 86). The rape of women during conflict has attracted considerable attention amongst human rights advocates, activists and the UN, following the events of mass rape during the Yugoslavian civil war and the Rwandan genocide in the 1990s (Bergoffen, 2009, p.307), where the systemic rape became a deliberate action of military forces and used as a weapon

of war (Seifert, 1996, p.35). Human rights institutions including the United Nations and Amnesty International, scholars such as Brownmiller, Bergoffen, and journalists and social scientists, have condemned these acts of violence. They have attempted to understand and communicate the reality of wartime rape by documenting it in order to avert such crimes against humanity (Gottschall, 2004, p.129). Bergoffen comments that 'as philosophers we should not have had to wait for the rape to occur in order to mark their criminality' (2009, p.324). Feminist literature is fundamental at this point of the research because it has covered all aspects of the prevalence of mass rape involving civilians, especially women and young girls. It also highlights the devastating impact on affected societies, focusing on the failure of international institutions such as the UN to protect civilians in conflict zones.

Regarding the issue of sexual violence against women, Brownmiller (1975, p.14, 15) confirms that men have historically used rape to impose their power over women with the aim of frightening and controlling them. Rape was not morally acceptable in many societies according to Vikman, (2005, p.21). Copelon (2011, p.232) points out that rape against women in war and conflict was condemned, but, because it was regarded as being unavoidable, it became widely 'accepted' by the end of the 19th century. The apparent inevitability of wartime rape was not the only reason given for its acceptance. In his analysis of the changing moral values of societies during war, the anthropologist Thomas S. Abler (1992, p.4, 5) explains that the denial and justification of soldiers' atrocities and the acceptance of their crimes by society resulted from the dehumanisation of the 'other' or the 'enemy', and from distancing the culture of the vanquished from the conqueror. Also, crimes against humanity in war and conflict could be understood as a result from the fighters' tendency to break the law when they fall under the pressure of combat. And, through justification of their own societies who portrayed the opposition as 'barbaric' and lacking the same moral values (Thomas S. Abler, 1992, p.4). So, the moral attitude of soldiers and societies usually change during wars, and, whereas in peacetime the act of rape is considered unacceptable, it becomes justified during war regardless of the devastating impact on victims (Vikman, 2005, p.21). This indicates a disruption of conventional moral values during wartime. Confirming the above, through the description of the atrocities against civilian women in wars, Gaca (2011, p.73) mentions that women and girls who are

considered the 'enemy' face all kinds of terror and humiliation, for instance 'sizing, traumatizing, subjugating through rape, and torture', by foreign soldiers. When faced with such notable examples, can museums justify their silence on wartime rape as a response to the social acceptance of this phenomenon, so often considered inevitable? This is the focus of this research.

Although rape has been considered a normal act, sometimes encouraged in war and conflict (Fein, p.1999:58), it only started attracting the global attention during the war of the former Yugoslavia (Copelon, 2011, p.232; Bergoffen, 2009, p.307; Seifert 1996, p.35). During this war, women and girls were deliberately targeted by militants, and the estimated number of victims is approximately 60,000 women and girls (Seifert 1996, p.35). Seifert (1996, p.35) illustrates the reasons behind the world's concern of this issue : first, it was the first time that a specific group declared intent for sexual violence, and second, the growing number of women holding important positions in 'politics, academia, science, and media' allowed them to arouse political interest. In the case of the former Yugoslavia, mass rape was committed against Bosnian women by Serb fighters in detention camps which resulted in refugees fleeing to neighboring Croatia. As a result, the refugees were able to give the world their testimony on all kinds of atrocities committed against them (Brownmiller, 1993, p.2). Sexual violence against women in Bosnia was regarded as a 'systemic' and 'ordered' act of war used as strategy by Serbs, which was later confirmed by the European Community investigations (Seifert, 1996. P.35).

Trying to identify the purposes of wartime rape, Seifert (1996, p.35) suggests that sexual violence against women serves 'cultural functions'. She indicates that studies on this topic have confirmed that wartime rape is not motivated by sexual desire, but that the perpetrators' satisfaction is achieved through the humiliation, the contempt of victims, and the feeling of power over civilian women. As expressed by Brownmiller (1993, p.2), 'sexual trespass on the enemy's women is one of the satisfactions of conquest, like a boot in the face, for once he is handed a rifle and told to kill, the soldier becomes an adrenaline-rushed young man with permission to kick in the door, to grab, to steal, to give

vent to his submerged rage against all women who belong to other men' (Brownmiller, 1993, p.2). According to Buss (2009, p.146) strategic rape theory assumes that military commanders encourage their soldiers to rape women as part of a strategic plan to destroy the life and culture of a people. Thus, rape is characterised as a weapon of war which advances strategic goals (Brownmiller, 1993, p.2, Buss, 2009, p.146). However, whilst many academics and human rights organisations favour this theory, Gottschall (2004, p.129) argues that it may not be adequate to account for the realities of war, as military commanders commonly avoid planning for systemic rape because this act is likely to put their strategic concerns at risk given that they might face legal repercussions (Gottschall, 2004, p.129). Nevertheless, it is important to consider seriously the incidence of strategic rape because of its devastating impact on the population. The contemporary conflict in northern Iraq is an example where the militant group ISIS invaded the city of Mosul and systemically raped Yazidi women to intimidate and humiliate the civilian population, most of whom have fled in fear from the city (Nadj, 2018), and most recently the sexual violence against Rohingya women by Myanmar soldiers in 2016-2017 (BBC, 2018). Also, not to forget the systemic mass rape against Bosnian and Rwandan women in the 1990s, which intentionally targeted women and girls as mentioned above.

Another reason for targeting women is the hate of the feminine body, as in many cases the perpetrators tend to distort women's body after raping them by cutting off their female organs, such as their breasts or slashing their stomach (Seifert, 1996, p.35). The only explanation for such violence is the hate of femininity and the hate of women is deeply rooted in some men's subconscious. Thus, the war becomes an adventure where fantasies about the destruction of women are encouraged and conducted, when law and order collapse (Seifert, 1996, p.35). In addition, women are also targeted because of their cultural status in a family context. If the aim is to destroy a culture of a certain population, the women are the first choice to achieve this purpose (Gaca, 2011, p.73). This is exactly what the Serbs did in order to destroy the Bosnian population. In addition to violence and mass rape, many women suffered from the shame of unwanted pregnancies, all of which contributed to destroying the wholeness of Bosnian culture,

tradition and religion (Brownmiller, 1993, p.2). In summary, rape is used as a way of dehumanising women by treating them as objects (Brownmiller, 1993, p.2).

The term 'genocide' was first used in the 20th century to describe deliberate mass killing, using extensive weaponry targeting specific groups of people or inhabited cities (Hynes, 2004, p.431). This term was also used to describe 'men's inhumanity' towards civilian women. During the former Yugoslavian war a deliberate mass rape was conducted by Serbs against Bosnian Muslim women who were held in camps to destroy them and their community 'by sexually contaminating' them (Hynes, 2004, p.432). In her analysis of genocidal wars, Brownmiller (1993, p.1) described wars that involved national identities such as the former Yugoslavia war in the 1990s – where the Serb Croats and Muslims fought for division, based on their 'religious differences' – as a conflict that was predominantly concerned with 'male identity', and, where all women unwillingly gained the identity of victims. Looking at the impact on women, Fein (1999, p.57) describes rape as a 'social death' since the enslavement of women has historically meant killing them socially rather than physically. This phenomenon is still occurring in modern genocides where victims of rape become isolated and ashamed on a social level. As a result, the stigma of rape followed women in their patriarchal societies. As Brownmiller (1993, p.2) points out that men or leaders see the rape against women as a destruction of their 'national pride, their manhood, and their honor'.

Historians tend to ignore military rape when recording history of war (Hynes, 2004, p.437). History of war is often dominated by the 'elite men' who announced wars, the legendary powerful leaders, and 'heroes' who fight and sacrifice their lives for their community (Hynes, 2004, p.431). This attitude has been socially and politically reinforced by military institutions, for instance soldiers' memorial sites, monuments, war veterans and parades (Hynes, 2004, p.431), which can also be seen in war museums. Wartime rape was an uncommon topic in studies until Susan Brownmiller referred to it in 1975 (Gaca, 2011, p.74). Even though evidence of ancient wartime rape might be considered vague or limited, given that there were no witnesses or victims alive to communicate what happened back

then, this also happens with modern warfare where victims are still unable to articulate their story (Gaca, 2011, p.74 and Vikman, 2005, p.21). As societies shift over time, the meaning of words may change, such as the meaning of 'rape'. In the renaissance era (between the 14th and 17th century), to rape meant to abduct or seize - as in the rape of the Sabine women by Roman men - an event that inspired paintings and sculptures by artists, including Ruben, Titian and Giovanni da Bologna. The word 'rape' was also used to describe the spoiling or destroying of land or country in conflict (Peter, 2011). Not until 1400 did rape acquire its current meaning, describing the act of forcing another person to have sexual intercourse against his or her will. Looking back to reoccurrences of wartime rape in history it is important to provide a deeper knowledge about this topic to individuals who seek to play an active part in eradicating this phenomenon and help survivors, such as lawyers, human rights activist and aid workers (Heineman, 2011, p.3). Heineman (2011, p.3) also points out that detailed studies of this topic, especially by historians, are crucial in influencing recent endeavours. Comparing acts of sexual violence in contemporary warfare with historical ones could offer some crucial information, for instance about the ways in which wartime rape has been employed as a genocidal tool. For example, the 1990s wars of Bosnia and Rwanda can be compared with the 'Holocaust and decimation of Native American population' (Heineman, 2011, p.3). Rape has surpassed borders and cultures to appear in all wars, from ancient Mediterranean civilisations up to the present day (Vikman, 2005, p.22 and Gaca, 2011, p.75). Consequently, museums as places where history of war is represented should not omit this topic in exhibitions and interpretation informed by historical and contemporary dimensions. Therefore, museums are in a strong position to help by raising communities' awareness about the horrors of war.

Comparisons between historical and contemporary wars have so far demonstrated a constant subjugation of civilian women. Regardless of the technological advancement of modern war during which people can be killed or targeted without any physical contact, rape against the enemy is still prevalent as a result of war (Vikman, 2005, p.22). Further historical stories have the potential to expand knowledge on the roots and origins of wartime rape. The commonality of sexual assault in historical and modern warfare might be surprising to some. Yet, with contemporary war accurate evidence on sexual violence exists

from several sources (including survivors) whereas evidence of ancient warfare tends to derive from the violators'/victors stories (Vikman, 2005, p.22). Evidence of women subjugated to sexual violence from ancient warfare does exist, however, they are not fully explored in museums.

2.4 The United Nations efforts to stop violence against women in conflict zones

Prior to the Balkans war, sexual violence perpetrated against civilian girls and women in conflict was not formally acknowledged or accepted; indeed, it was often ignored (Bergoffen, 2009, p.307). Historically, the international community kept silent on aggression against women in conflict despite its continued perpetuation (Aroussi, 2011, p.577). After the Bosnian War, the United Nations Security Council approved a criminal tribunal in response to the systemic rape carried out by Serbian soldiers against more than 20,000 girls and women in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Copelon, 2011, p.232; Wood, 2006, p.311; Bergoffen, 2009, p.307; Shanker, 2007, p.369). The international criminal tribunals of the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and Rwanda (ICTR) provides significant evidence that the strategic theory of wartime rape where women are deliberately targeted by soldiers is a planned policy of militaries with their board strategic goals (Aroussi, 2011, p.578, 579). According to international criminal law, sexual violence is defined as a crime against humanity after the end of that war (Henry, 2013, p.95; Copelon, 2011, p.233). The United Nations (1993, Article 1) defines sexual violence against women as follows: 'For the purposes of this Declaration, the 'violence against women' means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life'.

However, in conflict both men and boys as well as women can be subjected to sexual violence, nonetheless , women and girls make up the majority of such cases (Amnesty, 2008, p.7). Historically, sexual violence against women was intentionally neglected in official documents, because, in return for peace the perpetrators commonly were not held accountable for their act of aggression (Aroussi, 2011, p.577). That led to a weakening of humanitarian efforts of the UN which resulted in an urgent need for a peace

agreement to protect women (Aroussi, 2011, p.577). As a result, the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (October 2000) urged parties involved in armed conflict to provide protection for women and girls from 'gender-based violence', emphasising 'rape and other forms of sexual abuse' (UN, 2018). However, twenty years after the Bosnian War the violent act of rape is still practised in contemporary conflict (Copelon, 2011, p.232). Regrettably, women suffering in war did not stop with the introduction of the UN peace agreement (the Resolution 1325) and criminal laws (Aroussi, 2011, p.590). A considerable limitation of the criminal law agenda is that it did not offer strategies to accommodate victim's needs, but, rather is focused on the punishment and prosecution of perpetrators, which can be described as a 'conservative and masculinized worldview' (Aroussi, 2011, p.590). Other limitation according to Aroussi (2011, p.590) is that the criminal law agenda has constrained the sexual violence against women to a strategic weapon of war, neglecting the reality of victims' complex identities, and the continuance practice of rape after conflicts. Buss (2009, p.160, 161) argues that focusing on wartime rape as a weapon of genocide can be problematic because it will assume that it is inevitable. Many examples exist that indicates the unsuccessful attempts to protect civilian populations by the UN criminal law. For instance, in Nigeria in 2014, the militant group Boko Haram abducted approximately 2,000 women and girls, many of whom were sexually abused and forced into marriage (BBC News, 2015). In clear violation of human rights, Rohingya women were systematically raped and tortured in 2016 and 2017 by Myanmar armed soldiers. Moreover, more than 717,000 of the Rohingya population were forced to leave their country to seek refuge in neighbouring Bangladesh due to the mass killing of civilians including elderly people and children (Human Rights Watch, 2018 and BBC, 2018). Despite all the eyewitnesses, survivors' testimonies and the substantial number of pregnant women refugees, the Myanmar government did not cooperate with the UN human rights organisations and denied any misconduct carried out by their armed soldiers (Human Rights Watch, 2018). Further examples of contemporary and past conflict are covered in the findings chapter regarding their representation (or not) in museums. Aroussi (2011, p.590) argues that one way of combatting impunity for sexual violence is to address all aspects of both its causes and consequences, and, to look broadly at 'non-legal' solutions to

hold perpetrators accountable, resulting in justice for victims. She concluded that it is difficult to separate the agenda that attempts to end the impunity of sexual violence from the agenda of gender equality, as well as the aims of 'ending militarism and wars' (Aroussi, 2011, p.590). Focusing on various factors and consequences that lead to rape could provide possible solutions to prevent it in future (Buss, 2009, 161).

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the devastating impact of wartime rape on women, by exploring how women were perceived in their societies, and the ways in which they suffer atrocities during war. Furthermore, the limitation of the UN in protecting those women was outlined. Thus, lamentably sexual aggression against women has been a common practice from ancient history to the present day.

The IWM represents in its gallery's wars starting from the 20th century until the present day. Therefore this research project presents an opportunity to investigate the occurrence of wartime rape during this specific period of history. The 20th century has witnessed a dramatic increase in civilian casualties of war, most of them women and children (Seifert, 1996, p.38, Hynes, 2004 p.436). According to Hynes (2004, p.436), in that century, wars have become more about targeting civilian populations as well as the infrastructure of their cities and their economy. For example, after WWII, the number of civilian victims from the former Soviet Union outnumbered the soldiers by 16 million people to 9 million. The ratio between soldiers and civilians in the Korean War was 1:5, 1:13 in Vietnam, and the total ratio expected in 1979 for future wars was 1:100 (Seifert, 1996, p.38). Previous expectations have proved correct where the percentage of civilian victims since WWII has increased by 90% (Seifert, 1996, p.38). War was historically identified as a combat between armed men, which has nothing to do with sexual desire. Rather, it is more about fighting where the aggressors seek to occupy new territories and control resources of material goods. In turn, the defending party fight to avoid sexual violence and to guard and protect their lands and themselves (Gaca: 2011, p.77). According to formal military records, the rape of women during war is no more than a general attack on the civilian population. In addition, they usually do not address the intensity of the

sexual violence on women, but, rather consider it as unfortunate, unavoidable, and secondary (Seifert, 1996, p.38). The victim figures in this century gives a completely different view because most casualties worldwide are women and children. This clearly indicates that it is not a mere fight between men but rather is a systemic operation against women (Seifert, 1996, p.38).

The topic of rape in conflict is a complex one; it is a sensitive subject due to its political, social, religious, moral and legal implications. There is international agreement that rape in conflict carries a stigma. It has been widely and repeatedly condemned by the United Nations department of human rights and all social and religious institutions. Yet, rape continues to be perpetrated by soldiers and other fighters in conflict zones across the world. Technological advancements, and especially in social media such as newspapers, TV news channels and official news on the web, have played an important role in challenging the denial of governments that their soldiers have committed rape. This has been accomplished through documentary films and interviews with the victims of rape which are available to the public and international institutions. Moreover, social media has raised awareness that rape in conflicts is more widely practised than previously claimed by government officials. Consequently, advocates for human rights groups continue to highlight this crime and to promote greater awareness and invite more people to join in their efforts to condemn and stop this shameful act. Today, social media and human rights groups are making the voices of rape victims more prominent. The repeated denial of governments and their officials that their soldiers have committed rape, may, in large part, be due to social sensitivity and legal consequences. Indeed, if they did admit that soldiers used rape as a weapon of war, this could damage the moral image and reputation of their armies.

In this thesis I argue that the rape of women needs to be clearly condemned by documents and artworks exhibited in museums. Moreover, museums need to highlight the rape of women in a deliberate effort to transform the attitudes of future generations and to create a culture that criminalises the rape of women and any attempt to encourage or promote rape culture is abhorrent. By adopting this attitude, museums might help to

condemn the incidence of rape of women during conflict and to avoid the suffering of women in generations to come.

The next chapter focuses on the representation of difficult history in museums and their potential role advocating for human rights and equality. It will also look at the issue of historical truth and the ways in which museums have dealt with uncomfortable history.

Chapter 3 - Literature Review: Exhibiting Difficult Topics in Museums

'In my opinion, however, when museums challenge authorised truths, they open a door to a deeper understanding'. Museums and Truth (Rekdal, 2014, p.xx).

Museums have demonstrated, on a number of occasions, that they are capable of tackling difficult topics such as the Holocaust and slavery (Duffy, 2001, p.10). Consequently, a subject such as rape in conflict could be addressed by museums, as this thesis aims to argue. Tackling this topic in museums might not stop the rape of women during conflict, but, it could at least raise awareness amongst the general population. It could also help to contribute towards a better understanding of human rights and human rights violations. Furthermore, it could result in a wider condemnation of sexual crimes against women and allow the voices of victims to be heard. In turn, this could put pressure on politicians and governments to act and help put an end to such pernicious crimes. Unquestionably, the absence of representation in museums is an issue worthy of research. But, the question remains: what drives such silence? Is it the controversy that might emerge from presenting this topic? Or, is it merely a curatorial choice?

Museums are regarded as places where new ideas can be explored (Fleming, 2012, p.252). Therefore, they are in a unique position to address human rights issues, such as the negative impact of war on civilians including the long history of wartime rape. It is noteworthy that the issues of human rights violations are overlooked in war museums. Thus, the first section of this chapter focuses on the concept of historical truth in the museum context. The purpose is to understand to what extent museums represent all aspects of history, do they discuss difficult issues or not? Since wartime rape is one part of the consequence of war it can be reasoned that it too should be seen as a true part of the history of war. This can help us to understand the museum silences on this vital topic. This research also examines museum approaches in tackling difficult topics and what particular challenges they might face in doing so. Some examples related to such controversial topics

will be discussed. Next, this chapter will investigate war museums and the ways in which they have engaged with the subject of war, and, drawing on several examples to consider how such a difficult topic such as wartime rape has been silenced in these museums. This chapter also will explore feminist's perspectives of museum representation. This chapter argues that the topic of wartime rape is silenced in war museums. This is largely due to their tendency to glorify war with a focus on the concepts of patriotism the suffering of the soldier, political leadership, battlefields and weaponry. Thus, such issues easily function as a memorial site for those who may have endured the war.

3.1 Historical truth

When thinking about what kind of truths museum professionals encourage and challenge, it is important to question what is meant by 'truth'. Is it the official narrative of an historical event? Why is it important to be truthful? The meaning and the importance of the term 'truth' has been debated amongst philosophers and across theories, and truth is a central concept in philosophy (for instance, by Pascal Engel in his book, *Truth* (2000). Engel explains that the concept of 'truth' cannot be questioned or analysed in isolation from other related concepts that are intrinsically linked to it such as 'belief, assertion and knowledge', because the word 'truth' is considered as a standard feature in searching for knowledge (2000, p.147). The term 'true' is used as a means of supporting or advocating contested theories, or as an assertion that it is accepted or glorified by people (Engel, 2000, p.3). The analytic philosophers of the 20th century have examined the definitions of 'truth' through several concepts; 'truth' could be defined as a 'correspondence between statements and reality', or 'a form of coherence between our statements', or pragmatically it can be seen as a preference of certain statements over others because they benefit a version of history (Engel, 2000, p.4 and Burgess, 2011, p.12). Engel argues that truth is usually seen as a 'norm of enquiry', and in order to understand its importance, philosophers should consider 'truth' as a cognitive value and compare it with different values, stressing the ethical implications (Engel, 2000, p.8). In the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2006, p.1113) the term 'truth' is defined as 'a fact or belief that is accepted as true'. Based on this definition, do

museums emphasise 'historical 'truths' that are accepted by the wider public? Can the representation of specific aspects of war history be considered as historical 'truth'?

Thinking about the meaning of truth is important when considering the representation of historical events in museums. This will include, for instance the representation of the history of war. Museums are considered by visitors as trusted places that can provide truthful and well-researched knowledge, which is also claimed by museums (Rekdal, 2014, p.xx). Looking at how museums deal with truth, Rekdal notes that museum exhibition texts rarely present the 'truth of the matter' from different perspectives or angles, and that museums tend to embrace the traditional narrative to make it relevant (Rekdal, 2014, p.xix). This can be seen, for instance, when museums simplify the history of a time period or a certain continent because they have limited space and must choose between different 'approaches' (Rekdal, 2014, p.xix). As a result of this simplification, historical truth in museum exhibitions does not lean on a solid 'professional knowledge', but is, rather, reflecting a consent between the general public and the museum professional on the ways in which the museum must function (Rekdal, 2014, p.xix-xx). This raises questions about the extent to which museums can challenge authorised or normative truth on specific topics including difficult history. Do museums lack a public agreement over the topic of wartime rape as a part of war history? Perhaps, however, the evidence of wartime rape (discussed in the previous chapter) is deemed to be insufficient to be recognised in museums as a war crime? This thesis will seek to understand the reasons why wartime rape is not represented within the narrative of war history despite the overwhelming evidence available.

When discussing the representation of historical events in museums it is worth considering the meaning of the word 'history' and its link to 'truth'. Regarding the truthfulness of historical events, Golding (2014, p.3-4) explains that, in a particular context or situation, 'truth' and reality as a concept affects and determines people's actions. As in the process of recording historical incidents in museums, Golding (2014, p.4) questioned the impact of the social role in term of its knowledge and emotions, indicating that over the course of history the disagreement on what is true and what is not, might have distorted the 'social harmony' (ibid, 2014, p.4). Individuals tend to see the truth from their own

perspective which adds complexity to what can be regarded as 'true' (Golding, 2014, p.6). People purposely tend to ignore some facts, especially those that trigger emotional responses, no matter how obvious or unavoidable these facts may be, and this particularly affects facts about controversial or taboo topics, such as political and religious issues or race and sexual orientation matters (Golding, 2014, p.4). Likewise, Kidd (2014, p.1) explains that some topics on historical events can be regarded as uncomfortable, because they highlight a sense of humanity or inhumanity in individuals. Universal topics such as 'exclusion, domination, conflict, territorial struggle, genocide, imprisonment, can show hidden agendas and raise critical questions about politics; these topics can also be linked to different emotions, for instance injustice, exploitation and lack of resolutions' (Kidd, 2014, p.1). Consequently, when applying the above explanations on this research topic, tackling the subject of wartime rape might expose the inhumanity of soldiers or fighters in conflict zones who might be regarded as heroes in their own communities. Also, it could raise a lot of questions about the role of war and politics in distorting civilian lives, with possible consequential legal claims. Thus, the uncomfortable emotions which might result from the representation of this topic may be an important factor why museums may seek to justify discounting it. To bring justice to the present it is necessary for museums to educate people about unjust past events, even if it is disturbing and uncomfortable (Rekdal, 2014, p.27).

When it comes to representing controversial subjects museums have attempted to explore different perspectives or approaches to a historical topic. This may include representing it in different ways in order to produce a contradictory narrative of the accepted or official historical truth (Kidd, 2014, p.1)., Golding (2014, p.11) states that museums can employ their spaces to adopt critical approaches to challenge inherited preconceptions which might open doors to new viewpoints. In the same context, Fleming (2014, p.27) argues that all kinds of museums could play a crucial role in changing people's perceptions of certain events, especially when they adopt and allow new ideas to provoke an 'emotional response'. This opportunity to change people's perceptions means that the public are encouraged to engage emotionally with others through their stories and life experience displayed in museums (Fleming, 2014, p.26). Emphasising the importance of accommodating different perspectives of the official truth, Golding (2014, p.17) argues that

through adopting challenging approaches, museums could support their visitors to look critically at any subject matter and examine any authorised information that comes from multiple sources including newspaper or TV. As a consequence, this may even empower people to defend human rights and to seek justice for all humanity. Such empowerment could contribute in making the world a better place (Golding, 2014, p.17). However, adopting this approach can not only oppose the official history which is usually offered to the general public, it is also puts the history in a position that faces or conflicts with 'human rights, social justice, and conflict resolution agendas' (Kidd, 2014, p.2 and Golding, 2014, p.7). The arguments above shows the importance of taking a stand in order to change traditional narratives whilst recognising the difficulties museums face in discussing such controversial topics. However, there is a gap between the above discussion and current museum practices which questions the extent to which theoretical studies are turned into practice. How can museums transcend the official historical narratives when it comes to the presentation of war and its impact on civilians, especially women?

It is important to bear in mind that it is not an easy task to represent the whole truth, or, all aspects of a specific topic in the museum exhibition or gallery space. This may, in part, be due to space limitations as well as the amount of information linked to a specific historical event or story. Therefore, it is acknowledged that, it would be very difficult to explore all aspects of a particular story. In such circumstances the curator's role is to select and interpret the most appropriate components and/or objects from their point of view, which inevitably might neglect some aspects of the story being presented in the museum.

3.2 Difficult topics and human rights

Talking about difficult exhibitions, Bonnell and Simon emphasise that an exhibition can be regarded as controversial when its content stirs up people's objections over efficiency and accuracy (2007, p.66). This means that historical narratives in museum exhibitions are implicitly seen as accepted by communities, but controversy can appear when new information that is not previously known or acknowledged is displayed (Bonnell and Simon, 2007, p.66). Additionally, the lack of understanding of these new perspectives can be challenging for some visitors, hence the reason why an exhibition may be described as

‘difficult’ (Bonnell and Simon, 2007, p.67). Furthermore, tackling history from different points of view might not fit in with visitors’ expectations which derives from their own experiences, and, therefore, may lead to a rejection of this new narrative or interpretation of history (Bonnell and Simon, 2006, 67). It is certainly the case that showing atrocities against civilian women in museums may not always meet with the expectations of some visitors who might think that this topic is not relevant to their personal experience. However, is this an acceptable justification for museums to look at the history of war from a narrow viewpoint? If museums are about delivering proper, active and engaging education to public (Drago, 2014, p.20), then they should provide adequate historical narratives that do not focus on some facts and neglect others. Addressing difficult topics will not interfere with the essence of the museum tradition, but, rather, it will engage people with different topics through alternative approaches (Drago, 2014, p.20).

Historical events can be seen differently from one generation to another. Looking into the concept of difficult heritage, Sharon Macdonald (2009, p.2) explains that past events which has been regarded previously as a national pride, such as colonialism, can be seen as shameful or regrettable to today’s generation. The greater majority of museums try to avoid any explicit representation of colonialism and, as a result, keep colonial objects hidden in their storage (Macdonald, 2009, p.2). The same consideration can be applied to war, as what previously was perceived as military victory and pride can now turn in to a ‘source of embarrassment’ (Macdonald, 2009, p.2). For example, the atrocities against Chinese civilians in the Rape of Nanking in 1937, which was committed by the Japanese army, was seen by some Japanese as glorified violence and even seen as a national accomplishment which even appeared in school textbooks (Macdonald, 2009, p.2). But, many Japanese people who learned about these atrocities deemed it a shameful memory (Macdonald, 2009, p.2). The controversy and disagreement also have evoked among museum sector over the fact that the allied had destroyed violently Japanese and German cities in a bombing campaign, ‘especially Dresden’ during the Second World War (Macdonald, 2009, p.2).

For example, Dean (2009, p.2-4) describes how the Canadian War Museum faced an organised campaign by a veterans’ group objecting to a display at the WWII exhibition.

One exhibition panel entitled '*Enduring Controversy*' (Manson, 2007), displayed images of civilian victims and detailed the devastating impact the allied bombing attack had on German civilians and cities, where approximately 600,000 people died (Dean, 2009, p.3). They also insisted that the museum should remove two commissioned paintings depicting members of a Canadian Airborne Regiment torturing and killing a Somali teenager (Dean, 2009, p.3). The objection came out of fear that the public might see the veterans differently - persons who committed an immoral and ineffective campaign or as war criminals - instead of being national heroes (Dean, 2009, p.4). Their argument was that the bombing campaign was necessary during WWII so that the war could end sooner. The group also argued that that standpoint should be highlighted in the exhibition narrative (Dean, 2009, p.4). Manson (2007), who was a former chief of defence staff (1986-1989), criticised the display arguing that it might convince the visitor that the bombing campaign was not very successful. Indeed, he argued that the focus on the impact on the German civilian is not a popular topic. He saw that questioning the morality of the bombing campaign against civilians should not be discussed in a museum which explicitly dealt with the Canadian's contribution during WWII. Instead, they should display the accomplishments that the campaign achieved; an acceleration to the end of the war as well as political gains (Manson, 2007). Thus, it could be argued that such an exhibition neglects the views of civilians from any side of the conflict and they have no opinion regarding the conduct of the war. Consequently, it might be logical for a museum to question the morality of attacking civilians regardless of any political gain that led to that. However, adopting new identity by the museum cannot replace former one, because their thoughts manifest into the real world in a form of the keeper of national culture (Purbrick, 2011, p.170).

In trying to defend their decision the museum insisted that what they displayed was an accurate historical fact, and if they respond to these demands that could encourage other or opposite groups to seek their different interests (Manson, 2007). In his article Dean (2009, p.2) suggests that daring to deal with such a controversial topic in the Canadian War Museum came from their confidence that they have a trusted position in society which had been confirmed by international surveys. However, theory might not reflect reality as the museum is constrained by a prevailing national account which is hard to challenge (Dean,

2009, p.10). In such a situation it was not a matter of contesting truths, but it was an issue about whose truth gains importance and focus in the museum (ibid, 2009, p.6)? Competing over ways of representation might indicate the importance of museums in shaping the societal view on different matters. It is important to keep in mind potential controversy that might emerge from challenging the national narratives of the history in museums. This attempt to challenge national narratives is evident where some museums in Japan and Germany have been representing victims of WWII. For instance, in Japan the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace discusses Japanese military involvement in sexual violence against women. Also, the memorial site for Holocaust victims in Germany now exists. This raises questions such as, does this kind of representation reflect the generational mindset changing to acknowledge and accept such new narratives (as explained above by Macdonald (2009))? Furthermore, do we see people willing to acknowledge the military wrongdoing in war, and, as a consequence, the importance of protecting human rights? Or, is it a consequence of the defeat of those countries during WWII that forced them to acknowledge such atrocities?

The answer to these questions might not be as simple as 'yes' or 'no'. For example, Japanese officials were forced by an International Tribunal in 2000s to acknowledge the sexual slavery, named 'comfort women', committed by the Imperial Army during WWII (Rumiko, 2007, p.2). This, in turn, might have played a crucial role in encouraging a museum dedicated to that issue (discussed in detail below) to interrogate and examine this subject. In contrast, the case of the Canadian War Museum revealed that the veteran's group resisted the handling of this narrative in the exhibition. As they are holding much a powerful position since they are belonging to the war winners' side, they are the nation of heroes and sacrifices. It is worth noting that the UN did not hold them accountable over the excessive bombing of German civilians during WWII. However, the curators and the critical historians at the museum might reflect on what Macdonald (2009) refers to as 'generational mind changing'. It is true that each generation might look differently or from a different perspective at historical events. Thus, it might be better for the museum deal with historical facts like science. Where in science for instant, the speed of light equal

299792458 m/s, it is a constant number based on scientific theories and empirical evidence, and it is not contestable or arguable. So, historical facts about the wars winners and losers along with the resulting consequences and aftermath (both on victims and the destruction caused) could be represented in museums as a set of facts supported by evidence. Thus, visitors will be able to form their own opinion based on their understanding (Harwit, 1994, p.2). However, it can be argued that these facts might involve emotional impacts for both sides.

According to Macdonald (2009, p.2), the reason for resisting or ignoring some historical facts or events on the public level is that in the process of 'heritage-making' - which emphasises the identity of a specific group, nation or city - the focus is often placed on victories and achievements during war. Therefore, the likelihood of heritage-making including anything that is not suitable for their narratives is doubtful. However, this kind of narrative could not be continuing silencing others, because the impacts of some historical events might be still existed, and affecting those who are feeling it (Macdonald, 2009, p.3). As if they are a victims of war atrocities, they will seek acknowledgment, in purpose to stop this kind of violence in future (Macdonald, 2009, p.3). Other kinds of challenges could comprise national or international pressure to expose past wrong doings, or, as historical and archaeological evidence is presented which confronts official narratives (Macdonald, 2009, p.3). Attempts to cover difficult topics and difficult histories was gradually increasing during the 1990s, most notably with oppressed populations (Macdonald, 2009, p.5). In contrast, Macdonald (2009, p.5-7) provides examples of museums who have struggled to acknowledge a difficult past. As a result, they have avoided these challenging topics and instead settled for more comfortable ones.

Furthermore, one of the reasons museums shy away from the difficult issue of wartime rape is the 'negative emotion' which this subject can provoke. Bonnell and Simon (2006, p.67) suggest that feelings of 'grief, anger, shame, or horror' can be experienced when some historical facts are represented in museums, especially when the topic discusses genocide, violent and illegal interventions in other countries or cultures, slavery, and the 'seizure of aboriginal land'. Visitors usually prefer a positive and pleasant visiting experience over exhibitions that might cause negative emotions which attempt to tackle the

history of violence (Bonnell and Simon, 2006, p.67). Looking deeply into the matter of difficult exhibitions, Bonnell and Simon also outline several issues that may affect visitors in terms of emotions. Visitors can experience a difficult exhibition differently depending on their relationship with the topic in question. For instance, representing wartime rape might increase fear or worry if a visitor has experienced violence during war or has been a victim of rape or knows someone who has, which could be depressing, traumatising or anger-provoking. Other visitors who do not have the same experience might simply see the exhibition as mere documentation of a historical event.

Doing such exhibitions might encourage the public to accuse these museums of taking advantage of others' suffering through the recreation of painful and violent moments (Bonnell and Simon, 2006, p.67 and Rekdal, 2014, p.28). Thus, complexities in putting together such exhibitions can be attributed to visitors' emotions and reaction to the content, rather than the topic itself or related objects (Bonnell and Simon, 2006, p.67). For example, if the exhibition subject is wartime rape, questions that may arise include: who might be affected by this exhibition? In which period of history and where did this happen? And, in what way might the visitor be affected? These questions can help determine if an exhibition can be regarded as difficult (Bonnell and Simon, 2006, p.67). It is impossible to be neutral when dealing with concepts that involve war and peace, but, as previously mentioned, museums tend to look at political issues only when there is a public consensus on the outcome, for example, condemning slavery, the Holocaust or the South African apartheid system (Rekdal, 2014, p.28). Rekdal suggests that museums should deal with the complexity of difficult topics by accommodating researchers' critical findings, especially when the topic is contested, instead of adopting a simplified approach to historical topics (2014, p.28-29). The objective when dealing with complex humanitarian issues is to allow people to learn from difficult and violent historical events in order to prevent their reoccurrence (Bonnell and Simon, 2006, p.81). Thus, representing sexual aggression against women can provide a clear image on how war can destroy lives and the future of a whole population (see chapter 2). Thus, such exhibitions show that they can play an important role in condemning such terrible acts and, perhaps, how such crimes can be prevented for the sake of new generations.

3.3 Human rights perspectives

From the human rights viewpoints, Sandell (2017, p.145) observes that adopting different perspectives in museums does not necessarily evoke a large-scale controversy among the public, but, rather, will lead to negotiating the opposite demands. However, museums have a moral responsibility to declare their support for human rights by choosing moral demands in spite of any potential controversy (Sandell, 2017, p.148). Museums need to adopt new approaches that could value human rights (Sandell, 2017, p.156).

Talking about controversy and disagreement over the representation of war atrocities, Duffy (2001, p.1) suggests that exhibitions which demand human rights protection are considered controversial on a political level because of the strong connections between politics and the issue of human suffering. For instance, in the case of the representation of war and conflict, disagreements over interpretation amongst different groups in one society might be aroused (Opotow, 2015, p.239). Consequently, questions surrounding the museums narratives in terms of its inclusion and exclusion of particular groups in society or who creates past narratives in the museum might surface (Opotow, 2015, p.239). These conflicting views appear in museums, sometimes when the less represented groups require to be acknowledged on the level of representing their 'identity, experience and history', because they need to tell their part of the story (Opotow, 2015, p.239). In order to deliver an exhibition applying solid evidence on past atrocities requires that museums accept that there are multiple truths. But that might not be always achievable, as each specialized museum has its own limitations (Opotow, 2015, p.239). However, representing human rights in museums could be seen as inclusion, just like the Enlightenment project where everyone is included to become the ideal citizen (Purbrick, 2011, p.170). As what consider in the past as a right for a few people for instance, European men, belong now for everyone (Purbrick, 2011, p.170).

In her description of historical museums, Susan Opotow (2015, p.229) states that these museums use and present historical evidence from past records to encourage the public to remember people and events. Yet, some of these museums focus on traumatic events of history instead of promoting past achievements, as they commemorate topics that include

'injustice, violence, and violations of human rights' (Opotow, 2015, p.229). Thus, tackling topics of difficult human experience in museums such as wartime rape, genocide, and the slave trade cannot be separated from the concept of human rights violation (Duffy, 2001, p.10). In his article, Duffy (2001) classified museums that dealt with human suffering in five categories; i) museums of remembrance, ii) Holocaust and genocide museums, iii) museums of slavery and the slave trade, iv) museums of African American civil rights, and v) prison museums and museums of torture, giving examples related to each category in several countries. However, it is noteworthy that war museums are not mentioned separately in that list given that they play a similar role in terms of conveying complex meaning related to national legacies, as well as acting as memorial sites (Carden-Coyne, 2010, p.64, Whitmarsh, 2001, p.2). These museums function as places for political representation, which signifies the continuous social discourse on human rights (Purbrick, 2011, p.169). In some way, this offers a kind of compensation for those who lost their rights in the past by acknowledging the denial of their humanity (Purbrick, 2011, p.169-170). Duffy (2001, p.16) sees that these museums could positively contribute to defending human rights through educating the public on these issues. Thus, it can be perceived that museums are the keepers of historical evidence of past cruelty, rather than libraries and archives (Purbrick, 2011, p.168). Winter (2012, p.152) considers the role of war museums regarding the representation of conflicts and asserts that they gained in importance in shaping social identity. They do so by telling stories about people's experiences, who they are and how they become what they are today. In that sense war museums can be regarded as a sacred site (Winter, p.152). Consequently, it is worth asking about the ways in which war museums approaches the subject of victims of war, and, to what extent do they deal with the topic of wartime rape? The example above of difficult exhibitions (the Canadian War Museums) might present obstacles in how museums of war try to interrogate the subject of war publicly. On the one hand they have to consider the balance of self-image and political perspectives, whilst, on the other hand, the subject of the horrors of war. Furthermore, museums are acutely aware that the images of the soldiers as the heroes might be distorted if the museum dares to discuss crimes against civilians during war. This issue is further discussed below.

3.4 War museums

This section examines war museums in order to understand their approaches in representing wartime history, as well as the ways in which they dealt with the issue of victims of war, women, and wartime rape (if at all). War museums plays a role in defining social identity through its position as a place of contested power (Whitmarsh, 2001, p.2). Since the 20th century national power and the image of the state was strongly connected to death in war not least because of the mandatory recruitment of individuals in the army (Whitmarsh, p.6). Therefore, the 'self-image' of any nation could be constituted by memory of war. In that sense, the idea of commemoration was employed to justify past wars and to encourage citizens to participate in future ones. Thus, any critical perspective of past wars might promote 'accusations of being unpatriotic' (Whitmarsh, 2001, p.3). Winter (2012, p.152) pointed out the dilemmas that war museums might face in terms of wartime representations and what path these museums should follow: Should museums present war from the soldier's perspective and seek their approval for this display? More importantly, however, who decides what the museum should or should not present? Thinking about these questions, Winter (2012, p.152) refers to the incident of the *Enola Gay* exhibition (coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II which told the story the *Enola Gay* played in securing Japanese surrender) at the National Air and Space Museum (Smithsonian) in Washington; a similar case to the Canadian War Museum discussed earlier. In 1995 WWII veterans demanded that the museum director remove a section of the exhibition which talked about the terrible impact the nuclear bomb had on Hiroshima when it was dropped (Winter, 2012, p.152. Harwit, 1994, p.1-2. Kohn 1995, p.1036-1037, Whitmarsh, 2001, p.4). The then director intended to provide a balanced exhibition which not only illustrated the veteran's contributions and sacrifices in order to end World War II, but also to convey the truth about the devastating consequences the nuclear bombing had on civilians in Japan (Harwit, 1994, p.1-2). This approach sought to address the younger generations concerns about the proliferation of nuclear weapons

during the Cold War, by attempting to exhibit that issue in a comprehensive manner. Questioning if the purpose of that bomb was originally to threaten and pressure the Soviet Union back then (Harwit, 1994, p.1-2).

Kohn (1995, p.1036) suggests that the exhibition was dropped due to political reasons; for instance, from pressure of veterans' groups, social critics and politicians. Thus, questioning the purpose of that bomb and showing the civilian victims of the nuclear attack might perhaps distort the image of the American fighter. Consequently, abandoning the exhibition meant that the museum gave up its academic 'independence and a significant amount of its authority in American intellectual life to accommodate to a political perspective' (Kohn 1995, p.1036). Nonetheless, denying such a thoughtful view of the war's history might reveal the political power of both veterans' groups and politicians where insisting on the kind of narrative serves their agenda solely. This conveys that they are the exclusive owners of the memory of war (Winter, 2012, p.152). Perhaps, therefore, war museums should avoid topics which could provoke controversy, especially if it involves war veterans (Winter, 2012, p.152, Kohn 1995, p.1037)? As a result, it can be said that representing war from different points of view, especially if it is probing the impact on civilians is politically difficult, and, could be more problematic if the museum is located in a state in which their soldiers are not held accountable by the United Nations for atrocities committed during war. For example, the case of the Canadian War Museums and the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, compared to Women's Active Museum on War and Peace in Japan (mentioned below). Museums might wish to deal with controversial topics or difficult history in order to foster social integration between different groups. Such integration can lead to openness as the case of Auckland War Memorial Museums demonstrates (Winter, 2012, p.153).

Winter (2012, p.153) compared two war museums, one located in Canberra (Australia) and the other in Auckland (New Zealand), pointing out their distinct approaches regarding wartime representation. The Australian War Memorial in Canberra is run by the Ministry of Veterans' Affairs. This museum is considered a sacred place, functioning as a memorial site for soldiers who died in 'both world wars', through exhibiting a list of their

names and a constructed installation simulating the battlefield. It shows the ideal images of sacrifice without any defects, ignoring the long history of violence against aborigines. In contrast, the Auckland War Memorial Museums, which maintained by the Home Office, also memorializes the soldiers, but, it was more explicit in presenting the violent history and racial attacks against aborigines. The museum handled this topic, which started with white settlement during the 18th century, and dedicated a large exhibition space to discuss that issue in-depth. The acknowledgment of such a violent history might be due to the social integration of aborigines within their society, compared with the 'Australian experience' (Winter, 2012, p.153).

The example of the National Air and Space Museum, and the Canadian War Museums reflects what Carden-Coyne (2010, p.64) describes as a complex relationship between war museums with governmental funding and donors which makes them more cognisant of their different sponsors. That results in strengthening their ties with 'veterans, families and wider public' (Carden-Coyne, 2010, p.64). Consequently, topics like rape and the torture of civilians, disability, and psychological and physical impacts on soldiers, are inevitably ignored in museums, where the emphasis is often placed on remembering sacrifices of soldiers as well as their heroism (Carden-Coyne, 2010, p.64). War museums, according to Winter (2012, p.152), did not succeed in representing the war due to the lack of consensus over the way in which wars were actually shaped. They only mapped the paths and traces of war, which as a result lead to battlefields locations where soldiers fought, and where cemeteries of casualties exist (Winter, 2012, p.152). However, the museum is seen almost as a sacred site where war is apt to be exhibited (Winter, 2012, p.152). That war museums can determine the social identity, in addition to its moral role (Winter, 2012, p.152-153). These museums exist to honour men and women who endured the war; thus, it concentrates on topics around weaponry and battlefields, whereas the history of anti-war movements is allocated a much smaller exhibition space (Winter, 2012, p.153). War museums also have undeclared rules of representation priorities, which excludes horrific images of casualties. This approach of representation of war is especially common in museums dealing with both WWI and WWII. Often, a variety of weapons is

central in the exhibition gallery attracting a large number of visitors, particularly school children (Winter, 2012, p.154).

Looking closely at war museums the Imperial War Museum (London) can be regarded as a particularly suitable example which can help us understand the politics of representation.

3.5 The Imperial War Museum

The purpose of creating the IWM in 1917, during the WWI, was originally to provide a continuous support for the war effort and to emphasise notions of national unity and common experiences (Whitmarsh, 2001, p.4-5, Winter, 2012, p.153, Mercer, 2013, p.333-334, Cundy, 2017, p.261). The museum aimed to be a memorial site to commemorate the war. This was achieved by collecting materials such as weapons and ammunitions for exhibition to the next generation (Mercer, 2013, p.33, Cundy, 2017, p.263). As the IWM website states ‘explore around 800,000 items [online] that tell the story of modern warfare and conflict, collected by the museum since 1917’ (IWM 2020) The museum receives its funding directly from central government and the large amount of its displayed objects came from military cooperation (Whitmarsh, 2001, p.6, Mercer, 2013, p.334). Traditionally, war museums place greater importance on technology as a means of portraying war. The focus on technology could help the museum avoid any controversy related to morality (Whitmarsh, 2001, p.7). The majority of the IWM displays are focused on technology, in particular, the prominent atrium space which presents a variety of weapons used in wars such as planes, WWII Russian T-34 tank, V2 rocket, a WWI gun, and Reuters Land Rover, with a description of these objects (Whitmarsh, 2001, p.7, Winter, 2012, p.153). The museum, in trying to portray a more realistic representation of war, attempts to some extent to tackle the topic of soldiers suffering which is illustrated through personal stories. For example, the love letters written by some soldiers to their partners before they were tragically killed, as well as intimate details about their life in the trenches during WWI. There were also references to the British civilians who were killed by bombing raids on London - ‘the Blitz’ - during the WWII (Whitmarsh, 2001, p.7).

Surprisingly, the largest space in the IWM illustrates the British experience in conflict since the 1990s. This has influenced the archival collection and historical narratives which has contributed to the creation of an unbalanced collection of cultural materials and memory (Hawkins, 2020, pp. 210). Currently, the IWM is intending to offer more complex narratives in its Second World War permanent galleries. This will be accomplished by including stories about the victims of war from other countries who were also impacted by the devastating consequences of WWII, specifically China (Hawkins, 2020, pp.210-11). Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the museum's audiences prefer to keep the focus on British history (Hawkins, 2020, pp.210-11). Taking this approach at IWM might be a response to the changing role of museums towards addressing human rights issues and therefore condemning all kinds of atrocities, as explained by the scholars above. As one of the museum's moral roles is to defend the moral demands related to human rights, in spite of controversy (Sandell, 2017, p.145).

The senior curator at the IWM, Hilary Roberts (2017), states that the Imperial War Museum does not have very many parallels. So, it is not a military museum, it is a museum funded partially by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and its role is to document, interpret and record the causes and the consequences of modern conflicts. The fact that the museum is concerned with documenting modern conflicts makes it a suitable choice for this research project to explore the representation of wartime rape in museums. Modern conflict includes war commencing from the First World War to the present day, and where sexual violence against women was well documented in historical archives and condemned by the international community. During the 1990s, an acknowledgment from the UN that rape is considered as a crime against humanity was recognised. Sexual violence against women is part of the history of conflict, and therefore should be addressed in war museums. The IWM plays a significant role in offering an important archive of the contemporary history of war which consists of resources including 'manuscripts, films and photographs' (Winter, 2012, pp. 161). This makes it particularly suitable to discuss atrocities against women and other civilians.

3.6 Feminists perspective and exhibiting sexual violence in museums

This section considers the feminist's perspective of museum representation drawing on some examples of feminist practices and the way in which they deal with difficult topics with a focus on sexual violence against women. This section starts with feminist reflections on memorial museums by considering the concept of the militarised tourist and how the feminist approach in analysing exhibitions dealing with war memorials can be utilised. Then, it will provide examples of museums dealing with the subject of rape in different contexts. The first example discusses the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace in Japan which focuses on wartime rape and sexual violence through the context of 'comfort women' which was committed by the Japanese military during WWII. Thus, the purpose is to understand its motivations as well as the difficulties this kind of museum faces. The other example investigates an exhibition about representing rape against women during peace time. This exhibition took place in 2010 at the Women's Museum, Aarhus, Denmark and an interview with the museum director in 2017 was undertaken. Both museums focus on the traumatic experience of rape against women, from a feminist point of view. The reason for providing these examples is to argue that the subject of sexual violence against women can be presented in museums, but, to illustrate that the museum can face considerable resistance at the political level if the rape is linked to the consequences of war. These examples present feminist perspectives on the subject of sexual violence against women both during wartime and in peace time.

Museum critics tend to see museums through their own distinct specialisation which allows them to focus on a specific aspect or incident often presenting a descriptive analysis of the chosen institution which could prove or advance their point of view (Hein, 2007, p.31). This leads to the realisation that there is no single theory could explain all verity of the museum institutions, and there is a need for a theory that could provide a fundamental support for the future museums, and set the foundation for an adequate planning, reflecting on ideas that could fit different museums (Hein, 2007, p.31). In the same context, feminist theory could play a role in supporting museums in exceeding their 'traditions' (Levin, 2010, p.49). Levin (2010,49, 50) concludes that feminists question women's traditional position in society and recognising the differences between biological sex and social gender.

Moreover, they investigate the significance of male traditional endeavours for 'exploration and conquest of colonies; the glorification of war and violence; and an aggressive pursuit of wealth and domination' Levin (2010:49, 50).

Additionally, feminists challenged the hierarchical contrast which places importance of 'masculine over feminine, public over private, science over art' (Levin, p.50). In the museum context, feminist theory investigates the origin or the source of collections with an emphasis on making the information publicly available to underline the ways in which these objects were obtained. In terms of visitors, feminist theory provides an analysis of museum collections which could help them to reveal the hidden 'messages about gender' (Levin, 2010, p.50). Porter (2012, p.63) criticizes the empirical tendency of museum practitioners who argue that museums are representing historical 'reality' as objects conveys the 'truth' and, therefore such theories are not needed in museums practice. All of that reflects the preconceptions and experiences of a certain society which can be seen through the ways in which they translate common or 'obvious' knowledge or experience of that specific society into a museum text as a solid 'reality'. (ibid, p.64). As feminist theory has emerged directly from women's experience as an 'object' and indirectly as 'subject, seeking a profound revision of concepts like 'subjectivity and otherness'' (Hein, 2007, p.32). This position has allowed Porter to reveal the lack of neutrality in museums through situating herself in the place of the opposite (2012, p.64).

Through her analysis of museum representation, Porter (2012, p.64, 65) found that stereotypes surround the notion of masculinity and femininity. This can be seen through the formation of the 'ideal' relations in terms of 'subject/object, self/other, progressive/ static' and so on. Thus, women usually take a subordinate and passive role in museums as a means of providing help and support for men, while men are put in a more central and active role showing them in a deeper and more developed representation of that of women (Porter, 2012, p. 65). So, the main objective for applying feminist theory in museums is to accommodate different perspectives from 'others', revealing new views and encouraging visitors to acknowledge and accommodate differing viewpoints (Hein, 2007, p.34). Thus, war museums tend to place greater importance on the conduct of war which predominantly

focusses on the activities of men. In contrast, women are represented as supporters for the war effort and often play a subordinate role in war museums and its exhibitions.

As an example of feminist practice, Cynthia Enloe (2016) discussed the concept of the 'militarised tourist' by considering three different memorial sites from a feminist perspective. She suggests that a feminist approach might be 'more reflective' (Enloe, 2016, p.530). Through her investigation process, Enloe (2016, p.530) finds that the militarised structure is rooted within all aspects of society, including 'women and men and their gendered communities, workplace, entertainment, and governments'. Militarisation can describe a situation when someone is indirectly or secretly supporting the legality, efficiency and credibility of an institution without showing any explicit involvement, in which that person can hide her/his intentions (Enloe, 2016, p.350). That situation is more comfortable than developing a feminist awareness which generates a more reflective aspect but may also expose complicities (Enloe, 2016, p.530, 531). For example, reflecting on her visit to a site which commemorates the American Civil War at 'Gettysburg', Enloe suggests that visitors to memorial sites might unconsciously experience much stronger emotions of sadness regarding the death of young soldiers, than the death of migrants sinking at sea or women who are violently getting killed by their male partners (Enloe, 2016, p.532). Thus, the word 'militarised' can be understood as the inability to be critical and reflective.

As an American, Enloe (2016, p.533-534), in her visit to the Hiroshima memorial site, questions the role of the US government in perpetuating such an atrocity in the name of her security. The site includes the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum which is divided into two sections. The older one focuses on the history of the city before, during and after the bombing and engages visitors with horrifying images of the destruction following the nuclear bombing. This section, according to Enloe (2016, p.534), was difficult to see. The newer section of the museum takes a more critical approach. This might be influenced by the Japanese feminists who fought against militarisation, as Enloe (2016, p.534) observed. Unlike the first wing which was directed at tourists and the general Japanese visitor, the newer exhibition was intended particularly for a younger Japanese generation states Enloe (2016, p.534). It showed that Hiroshima was not a completely innocent city, but it was a militarised location containing a naval base during WWII. It was a gendered militarised city

(Enloe, 2016, p.534). By exhibiting the inhumane use of the atomic bomb against civilians as well as the facts about the city's involvement in war, the museum attempts to provide a dialogue between these two museum wings/sections. Whilst one section conveyed the message of suffering and 'never again' to the inhumane use of atomic weapons, the other encouraged Japanese visitors to see how the city did accommodate a military base which could explain the reason why this city was targeted for bombing. The contrast between the museum's old and new exhibitions might enable people to understand how the city was complicit in 'militarisation in order to exile the inhumanity of wars (Enloe, 2016, p.534). That does not mean that a simple visit to a memorial site will militarise the visitors, as each person can approach it differently depending on their own experience interests and understanding (ibid, 2016, p.536). Applying Enloe's (2016) reflective approach on war museums (which is also considered as memorial sites), provides opportunities for visitors to construct a more comprehensive understanding of war. Where visitors can recognise their complicities in militarism. That can be achieved for instance, if war museums allow their visitors to question the museum limits in representing human suffering caused by the violence of wars. By encouraging visitors to link what they see in museums with other memorial sites they can begin to realise and understand the ways in which past events shape the present (Winter, 2012, p.162). Once visitors become more aware of the negative consequences of war on humanity this could inspire all generations to avoid future violence, war and devastation.

3.7 Conclusion

As discussed,, museums are beginning to confront its classical functions of exhibition-making and representation largely in part due to the awareness of younger generations. Museums must rise to this challenge and take a major part in the transformation of society by encouraging thoughts and ideas to find solutions to conflict not through war. Museum professionals in war museums have a moral responsibility to avoid the glorification of war (Winter, 2012, p. 159). Thus, finding new ways of representing war is crucial to avoid the impressions and misrepresentations that are part of combat experience. The experience of war is not fixed, but it can be seen as a mixture of connected

and constructed traces of the past, which can be put together to create a meaning for people's lives, and the stories that they can tell (Winter, 2012, p. 162). Therefore, war museums should find different approaches in tackling war issues. For example, the classical ways in using weapons as a means of representing the horrors of war does not reflect the reality. Instead, war museums could be encouraged to place images and explanations beside each weapon to illustrate the damage and wounds its use would cause. Also, war museums should consider the gender balance in terms of its representation. This includes women, children and other civilians who constitute populations who were confronted with war and suffered its consequences. Their stories should be traced to convey a wider range of visitors' identities (Winter, 2012, p. 162). It is the museum's duty to focus on violence in all wars and relate it to the current reality which is constituted by the past (Winter, 2012, p. 162).

Museums are capable of being a beacon of hope for a better life, as evidenced by the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace where their initiatives help survivors and promote peace. The museum's content may change, but its role in preserving materials in helping to raise awareness on such difficult subjects endures (Purbrick, 2011, p. 168). Museums have a unique ability to consider different topics in any place or time period and can explore the scope of justice (Opotow, 2015: 231). They can also encourage people to broaden their horizons on different events, which can make the present a good place to live through imagining a better future (Opotow, 2015, p. 240). Thinking of the ways in which war museums represent the topic of wartime rape Chapter 5 will examine the Imperial War Museum in London. The scholar's perspectives will thus contribute in understanding silences on wartime rape at the IWM.

Chapter 4 – Methodology

“Having broken the silence, we enter a new world”

Richard Ennals (2007, p.632)

The primary goal of this research project is to gain an understanding of museum silence on the subject of wartime rape against women. This research uses a qualitative approach to help provide a comprehensive understanding of this complex issue of violence against women in conflict zones and its lack of representation in museum settings. Mason (2002, p.3) emphasises that “qualitative research aims to produce rounded and contextual understanding on the basis of rich, nuanced and detailed data.” It is useful to use a qualitative methodology for this type of research because of its potential to engage the reader with detailed aspects of the social world: qualitative methods help adequately portray its multi-dimensional facets (Mason, 2002, p.1). Mason (2002, p.1) also notes that the qualitative approach uses “methodologies that celebrate richness, depth, nuance, context, multi-dimensionality and complexity”. Data gathering for this thesis’s case study and throughout the research involves multiple methods. This includes visual and textual analysis of exhibitions, desk-based research such as document analysis and online reviews of collections; archival research, press reports and a small number of interviews. Each method involves an exploration of the subject matter over different time periods to gain a thorough understanding of the research topic.

The first section of this chapter will highlight the importance, definition and challenges of qualitative case study approach, then I will look at the meaning of silence, and the ways in which silences can be located in museums. The second section will discuss the Imperial War Museum as a case study and outlines and explains the method developed to investigate silence on the subject of wartime rape. Next, the methods of data collection in both the permanent and temporary exhibitions at IWM will be discussed. Finally, data analysis of the research will be detailed in this chapter.

4.1 Case study approach

Various disciplines from the social sciences such as, psychology, medicine, law and political science commonly draw upon the use of a case study approach (Creswell and Poth, 2016, pp 97). Creswell and Poth (2016, pp 96-97) suggest that case study research can be defined as a methodology in which the researcher uses a qualitative approach to investigate enclosed 'system/systems', a case or cases 'over time'. Here, the researcher collects comprehensive in-depth data from various resources using multiple methods such as 'observation, interview, audio-visual material, documents and reports' (Creswell and Poth, 2016, pp 97-98). This allows the researcher to report a 'case description' and case themes. The analysis chapter of a case study includes either multiple cases from different sites or a 'single case' from one site (Creswell and Poth, 2016, pp 97). In this research I am investigating a single case study of the IWM site in London, UK.

Creswell and Poth (2016, pp 97-98) outline that a case study approach can be identified with the following characteristics: A case study where the researcher looks at an in-progress existing case or cases to gather more accurate data. Also, one of the distinctive features that illustrates a case study is that it is bounded, i.e. it can be measured through its links to a specific place or a location where the case existed and the events and people who were involved. The policy or the plans for a specific type of case study can be determined through its purposes and intentions of conduct. For example, a unique case or a case with uncommon features or interest that needs a detailed description can be explored through a qualitative case study. This kind of case study is referred to as an 'intrinsic case', whereas, other types of case study are called 'instrumental', which is intended to understand 'a specific issue, problem or concern' (Creswell and Poth, 2016, pp 97-98).

Furthermore, Creswell and Poth (2016, pp 98) stress that in order to organise a valid case study, the researcher is required to gather and combine data using multiple qualitative methods, such as observation, interviews, documents and audio-visual materials which in combination offer 'in-depth understanding'. It is recommended that using a single source of data should be avoided because it is not enough to deliver in-depth understanding of a specific case or cases. The approach of tackling case study analysis is varied from one research to another. For example, the analysis in some cases includes 'multiple units' in a

case study, while other approaches will report on the entire case. In addition, some studies analyse and compare several cases while others will focus on analysing a single case study. Recognising the themes in the case study will allow the researcher to provide adequate description of the case, as these themes can raise some issues or concerns to be studied in each case. Consequently, the explored themes or the issues of case study, in addition to its description, will comprise the findings chapters. Thus, the researcher can analyse the themes chronologically comparing multiple cases looking at the differences and similarities or present the themes as a 'theoretical model'. Finally, at the end of the case study(ies) the researcher will provide a conclusion based on the overall resulting meanings from the case(s) (Creswell and Poth, 2016, pp 98).

Several challenges are associated with a case study approach. Creswell and Poth (2016, pp 101-102) state that identifying a case study could be challenging for the researcher, in terms of selecting the scope (broad or narrow). As for the case study research, the researcher must determine which bounded system to study. Among the different possibilities that could be suitable for study, the researcher must be in a position to recognise those which demonstrate the issue or the case of interest, ensuring it is worthy of study. Also, the option of whether to study a single case or multiple cases should be determined by the researcher. Choosing multiple case studies can impose further challenges in regard to the limitation of resources and 'case selection and cross-case analysis' (Creswell and Poth, 2016, pp 102). In addition, selecting multiple cases for study could contribute to weakening the overall analysis as the depth will be less than it would be for a single case study. The other challenge for the researcher is to decide the number of the cases in the study, which usually range between four or five. The reason for selecting multiple cases is the attempt of the researcher to find overall generalisation, which 'holds little meaning for most qualitative researchers' (Creswell and Poth, 2016, pp 102).

Regarding the analysis, a single case study will be guided by its purpose on whether it is instrumental or intrinsic (Creswell and Poth, 2016, pp 102). Whereas in multiple case studies, such purpose tends not to be explicitly identified. To tackle this issue, the researcher should identify in advance a phenomenon or object to guide the analysis across the cases (Creswell and Poth, 2016, pp 102). In the process of selecting a case study,

Creswell and Poth (2016, pp 102) suggest that in order to gather data about the selected case and determine the 'sampling strategy', the researcher must establish a rationale for the case selection. Determining a specific amount of information to offer an in depth understanding of the case, might limit the value of some case studies. However, it could be challenging for the researcher to set boundaries and restrictions related to time, events and processes. These boundaries are necessary to be determined by the researcher, as 'some case studies may not have clear beginning and ending points' (Creswell and Poth, 2016, pp 102). This research is using qualitative single case study approach to offer an in-depth understanding of museum silence on wartime rape in conflict zones.

4.2 Researching silence in a museum context

Visiting many museums before starting this research, I realised that there is unquestionably silence in museums pertaining to sexual violence against women during armed conflict. Indeed, there is no visual, textual or other form of representation which tackles this topic in many museums. This methodology section will demonstrate the ways in which I researched silence in museums, and what kind of factors can contribute to its occurrence. Methodologies concerning silence in a museum context have not been widely explored, investigated or written about. Therefore, this research will make an original contribution to this field by offering a novel methodological approach.

To begin, it is important to explore what silence means. Silence has many synonyms, such as muteness, quietness, voicelessness, speechlessness, or it can be a prohibition from speech, and a means to hide from persecution. Also, silence can be understood as 'when someone refuses or fails to speak' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2006, p.963). These synonyms or different modes of silence can be applied to different contexts. In terms of wartime rape, both victims and aggressors share silence. While the victims might not find a way to express their personal suffering, the aggressors might fear prosecution or social condemnation. Likewise, museums' silence might have different interpretations and objectives. In some political sense, silence can be used as a tool of imposing power over others, as a means of 'oppression', 'terror', or threat of destruction (Gilkey, 2007, p.22). In that context, silence does not reflect the means of 'self-expression'

but rather represents a confrontation with the imposed force. As a result, one cannot escape silence (Gilkey, 2007, p.22). Therefore, silence here as suggested by Gilkey (2007, p.23) can be understood as ‘the presence of absolute non-being among beings’.

Exploring the meaning of silence and the ways of revealing it, from a cultural and communication study approach, Richard Ennals (2007, p.626) points out that the meaning of silence can be different depending on its use in different cases or contexts. As a result, it is important to understand that there are different systems that involve silence and that each system has a distinct context in its use. Investigating silence is different from traditional ways of analysing documents of explicit knowledge, which may discuss for instance history or government policy. Investigating silence requires greater reflection on one’s own experience, by situating this experience in contrast with other cases. Doing so might help in extracting the meaning of silence and interpreting its fragments (Ennals, 2007, p.627-628).

Silence can be related to complexities and difficulties. Where there are two sets of information, one can be provided explicitly whilst the other is silent (Ennals, 2007, p.628). In terms of historical events, especially those which involve sensitive and conflicting incidents, silence can appear. Therefore, it is important to look for the unspoken and to recognise it throughout the context. Regarding silence on sensitive historical events, Ennals (2007, p.630) gives an example of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Therefore, people who were involved in its conduct, for instance, those who contributed to the process of enslavement of Africans, or those who wrote about slavery or benefited from it like farm owners and others, tend to ignore the facts related to the many atrocities that took place and the injustices that occurred far from home. Thus, by denying their connection to it they continue to maintain the silence. Interestingly, this topic has not been dealt with in the British school curriculum, nor has the subject of the British Empire (Ennals, 2007, p.630). As a result, maintaining silence on such difficult subjects can contribute in presenting a biased and incomplete representation of history, and might lead to serious consequences in the future. Breaking the silence through the emergence of truth will nonetheless require changing former acceptable aspects of the historical narrative (Ennals, 2007, p.632). Based on the above, consideration of wartime rape, given it is a sensitive or conflicting history, might inevitably be silenced.

Thinking of silence in the context of museums, Mason and Sayner (2019, p.5) put forward eight ways to understand how different forms of silence can be generated in museums. The first type of silence is related to collecting historical records by museums. Mason and Sayner (2019, p.6) confirm that those who are not being included in the collected historical records are socially considered less powerful and their material culture is not considered as important or appropriate to be presented in museums. Historically museums were linked to the nation elite's material culture , thus, the situation where material evidence does not exist in the collected historical records can be considered as an 'absence of memories' Mason and Sayner (2019, p.6). Absence from the historical records implies that a certain group or individuals are not valued or recognised. However, from the 20th century onwards, museums began to shift their focus from cultural elites, and in the UK, museums started to pay more attention to working class lives and lived experience valuing their material culture (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.6).

In the same context, silence can appear in different situations. For example, it may be the case that certain museums might not tackle specific stories because they simply do not have the resources or related objects to convey those stories/histories (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.7). In other cases, absence is related to the level of awareness of the curators or even their personal decisions in deciding whether they deal with a particular issue or not. Other reasons might be related to the size of the museum collection, as in the process of selecting materials for display, the selected items will be situated in the display fore. As a result, this might contribute in uncovering other stories (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.7). These kinds of silences are described by Mason and Sayner (2019 p.7) as 'silences in motion' as it can be applied to situations where museums have to deal with immense archives and collections. Therefore, silence might be implicit in archives and collections. Silence can also be imposed on those who have no authority, as in the case of silencing indigenous people in museums. Choosing what to exhibit in museums does undeniably depend on the meaning and the power of the story of interest, in terms of its impact on current and future visitors. However, in some cases that story of interest may be regarded as challenging history, for instance colonialism, and as a consequence, silence is produced. For example, some aspects of a topic or a story are avoided in museums, due to

the museum limitations in term of representation and recourses (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.7). So, museums, as cultural institutions, can be the ideal arena to determine silences on the level of 'historical record, politics of collection and display, and the limits of historical narratives' (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.7). On the other hand, if an exhibition was dedicated for particular topic, such as private collection, and have announce that, then trying to spot silence will not make sense. When museums declare that they are representing what is related to 'a nation or community', or, if they are linked to national and international subjects, then doing so will be seen as legitimate (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.8). In this case, war museums (discussed in Chapter 3) are concerned with the history of national and international war which might make them suitable spaces to research silence. In terms of historical records or collections, do we think that museums lacked evidence on wartime rape? This is highly unlikely (as detailed in previous chapters) - that wartime rape is evident and has been part of the history of war. Consequently, the dearth of resources available can be accessed from multiple places, such as UN reports, scholars work, victims' testimonies, amongst others. So, is the museums willing to deal with this difficult history and represent wartime rape, or, rather, is the silence on this subject the preferred choice of museum curators? This also might depend on other measures, as mentioned above, such as the level of awareness and curatorial preferences. This research investigates silences with a particular focus on museum display at the IWM.

The second form of silence in museums is concerned with the status of being silenced by external pressures. This kind of silence can be seen as political pressure, for instance, when a museum is directly funded by government or run by a government body. So, as a result, museums will function as a tool to emphasise patriotism and the state education (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p 8). External pressure might be inevitable, especially if the museum is receiving public funding from donors or government bodies. This funding might therefore obligate the museum to respond to specific expectations, from people in powerful positions and perhaps government. This is still happening in the UK where the government explicitly outlines 'its priorities for its funded bodies' (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p. 8). Therefore, funders' priorities could knowingly silence particular subjects which might be considered 'unsuitable'. Consequently, silence in museums is a product of

contested values that relate to public preferences, religious constraints, freedom of speech, and also, the museum's commitments to 'stakeholders' such as, 'artists, publics, politicians, funders and trustees' (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.8). Also, museums in some cases choose silence as a means of self-censoring, especially if staff expect or anticipate political consequences. Or, if the museum is located within a divided community where staff may prefer to not tackle particular subjects which might inflame a fragile or disputed situation. Indeed, the museum may want to avoid giving the impression that they are giving preferential treatment to a particular part of a community over another (ibid, p.8).

Thirdly, another form of silence is that related to a 'Museums' collusion in society's silences', which is, according to Mason and Sayner (2019, p.9), when a particular event is deliberately forgotten, or when society and/or institutions do not want to remember a specific incident. In this case museum silence can appear as a deliberate involvement with broader social denials. For example, museums who were involved in serving colonialism, or those still linked to objectionable practices which may include acquisition of illegal objects (illicit antiquities), or human remains that were acquired by force. However, this silence is not only serving the oppression of certain histories, but it can be employed as an imperative for social unity and continuous dialogue. As ignoring past atrocities might help in preserving peace within a divided community. Or This suggests that if a state is involved in a bad conduct, such as war crimes against women, then, its museums and public might ignore talking about it. Such challenges and obstacles should not prevent museums from finding innovative ways to reveal what has been silenced (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.10).

The fourth type of silence in museums which can in itself be powerful tool in order to make a specific point. Talking indirectly about a certain subject or idea, can make a straightforward point, through using new strategies or tactics, such as, different terminologies or names (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.10). This situation might serve in the case of conducting an exhibition to discuss conflicting views of a certain topic. Or might help in terms of using innovative ways to represent a sensitive topic. Though, this research is not focusing on this type of silences.

The fifth type of silence is when museums think 'they have nothing to say' (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.11). Museums express the view that they do not have the relevant

resources or materials to discuss this particular topic. As a result, they will tend to focus on particular angles within their collections (from which they are most comfortable with), which obfuscates them from seeing or confronting other aspects of history. Though, museums might be able to locate relevant materials if they are invited to look at their collection differently considering other potentials of history (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.11). Topics such as 'slavery, sexuality and disability' might be silenced in museums and, as a consequence, considered as hidden histories. It is worth highlighting that the silence could be the result of the ways in which museums organise their collection. For example, in 2007 the V&A Museum invited eleven international artists to participate in an exhibition entitled, '*Uncomfortable Truths*', marking the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade (Archive History, 2007, V&A, 2007). Their artworks were displayed in the permanent galleries, especially those pertaining to British history to emphasise the notions of a shameful past, and how the practice of slavery contributed to constructing the modern Britain. The exhibition chose to display these contemporary artworks with the permanent collection, confronting and revealing a difficult and painful past (Archive History, 2007, V&A, 2007). Mason and Sayner (2019, p.11) point out that the problem with the subject of hidden histories is that museums only present and discuss them in temporary and small-scale exhibitions. In doing so, museums may avoid any responsibility for these type of exhibitions as they invite artists to express these issues through their artworks. In many cases, exhibitions on hidden history or difficult history in museums if often influenced by an external catalyst such as anniversaries of historical events. From a critical standpoint this might be seen as an easy option as they are being pushed by external factors to deliver such exhibitions. This, unfortunately, signals that change in museums does not willingly derive from internal will (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.11). Silences can be expected in museums, when they focus on and repeating the prevalent narratives, through their ways of seeing and classifying collections (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.12). In terms of war museums the way they organise and present their collections might reflect some aspects of war but neglect others. For example, when war museums focus on displaying heavy weapons and soldier's uniforms, the narrative will ordinarily focus on battlefields and the soldiers sacrifice and suffering during, yet, the stories of victims, and, in particular women may remain silent.

Regarding other types of silences, Mason and Sayner (2019, p.12) suggest that different forms of silence can appear in the same space at a museum due to its multimedia nature. This means that the design or the architecture of a particular space might produce silence. Sometimes this can happen inadvertently when the exhibit layout undermines ‘the good intentions’ (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.14). Also, silence can be deliberate in museums as a means of commemoration such as ‘*Remembrance Day*’ in the UK (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.14). Typically, military museums and war museums use silence to respect and commemorate traumatic events. Additionally, silence in museums can come from the visitors who wish to ‘remain silent’ (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.15). For example, some subjects might be regarded by some communities as inappropriate, for example, domestic violence, addiction to alcohol or incest. Thus, these subjects and the stories might be excluded from historical records (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.15). In summary, museums silences can be understood as intersections of multiple complex layers of curatorial intentions and non-intentions, limitations of funding, political influence, architecture and design, cultural and historical specifications, and other aspects (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.16-17). Recognising silences on the subject of wartime rape in war museums may require looking for those unspoken stories as suggested by Ennals (2007, p.626). Or, as Gilkey suggests, looking for what is absent among what is represented (2007, p.23). In terms of understanding silences, Mason and Sayner identify that the type of collection and the ways it is composed and displayed might play a role in producing silence in war museums (2019, p.11). As we can see, silences in museums may not have a common or agreed meaning, but, it does exist and can be traced, depending on an individual’s intentions and interpretations. Whilst the Mason and Sayner types are helpful in describing different kinds of silences, the fifth approach is more relevant to war museums and therefore, for this research case study. Therefore, this particular type presents a useful theoretical framework for understanding and thinking about silences. However, they do not prescribe or outlines an empirical approach in details. This is what this chapter is aims to contribute.

4.3 The case of the Imperial War Museum London: revealing the silences

One of the reasons for considering the Imperial War Museum as the most appropriate case study for this research is that it addresses the history of war starting from the First World War to the present day. The museum also shines a light on how different wars affected the lives of people, both service personnel and civilians (IWM, 2014, p.1). This was through collecting a diverse range of materials from battlefields and the 'home front' such as 'weapons, uniforms, vehicles, flags, maps, films, audio recordings, photographs, diaries, letters, works of art' (IWM, 2014, p.1). Using the Mason and Sayner framework I will consider silences in war museums and, in particular, explore if the silences are in any way related to the type of collections the museum holds and its display in the gallery space. The first question I will ask is are there any materials in the IWM permanent exhibitions which refer or relate to wartime rape? This could comprise audio recording interviews with survivors, documentary films about the subject, artworks or documents. In order to effectively this question a visual and textual analysis of all permanent exhibitions will be carried out. Doing so might, therefore, reveal any silences on the issue. Furthermore, this approach could highlight which stories or concepts hold greater focus and importance, and, whether these representations take the space of other subjects.

On the IWM website (2019) a short video stating that the museum building itself is a 'witness to war and its harsh reality' allows visitors to experience the devastating impact of war for those who lived through it or others who are still living it. Viewing this video gives the impression that the exhibition covers all aspects of the history of war including violence against women due to the narrative that it discusses the devastating impact on people of war. Therefore, this research project seeks to investigate and trace the occurrence of sexual violence against women in war zones, focusing on the wars covered by the IWM, and utilising scholars' documents on wartime rape. This might help in exploring silences related to the topic of wartime rape in the IWM museum.

Regarding temporary exhibitions, as Mason and Sayner, (2019, p.12) noted above, they are usually more explicit in representing difficult themes and subjects. Thus, I studied some of these temporary exhibitions to determine if the research topic – wartime rape - is silenced at the IWM or not. If they have presented this subject in the temporary exhibitions,

I sought to examine the ways in which the museum has confronted this issue. Investigating if the museum commissioned artists to represent the topic from their point of view could signal that the museum wanted to avoid taking responsibility. In doing so, I looked at the existing temporary exhibitions during the period of the field work and examined the exhibitions archive at the IWM. Within the archive I collected data on previous exhibition's titles from 1917 to 2014 to see if the research topic is discussed or not. Given that wartime rape was recognised as a crime against humanity by the UN and international community I focused on the IWM's exhibitions starting from the 1990s onwards. By doing this, I could establish how often this topic was being discussed at the IWM. This is significant because violence against women still takes place in contemporary war (see Chapter 2). Ultimately, the goal is to understand whether there is silence in this museum and to identify those silences so that the museum can become aware. Engaging with the Imperial War Museum London as a case study will allow a deeper exploration of the difficult subject of wartime rape through its permanent and temporary displays to identify the ways in which women were represented and in what context in the museum. Employing a visual analysis method will contribute to a deeper understanding of the silences related to the research questions (page 18). Visual analysis will enable the researcher to provide thick description of the IWM's displays in numerous galleries.

4.4 Data collection methods

Data collection for the case study and throughout the research project employed multiple methods such as visual and textual analysis of the permanent and temporary exhibitions at the IWM as well as document or desk-based research, archival research, online collections, press materials and interviews. Each method involved an exploration of the subject matter over different time periods to gain a thorough understanding of the research topic.

As Denscombe notes, the researcher should not be constrained by any one method: she/he should have “the possibility of choice”, as different methods can be used within the overall research strategy (2010, p.154). Likewise, Creswell (2013, p.45) emphasises that data should be gathered from multiple sources, allowing the researcher to “review all of the data and make sense of it, organizing it into categories or themes that cut across all of the

data sources". The methods will help provide comprehensive insight into why there is a need to address this topic in museums. Previous/subsequent chapters has explored how museums have dealt (and can deal) with this difficult subject. Mason (2002, p.8) points out that "qualitative research should produce explanations or arguments which are generalizable in some way or have some demonstrable wider resonance". As this research seeks to develop an in-depth description and explanation of the chosen topic a case study approach employing social science methods was deemed most relevant and appropriate (Yin, 2014, p.4). The case study (the Imperial War Museum) has enabled me to collect precise and focused information which covers different dimensions of the subject matter by using a range of data collection methods such as documents, visual, textual analysis, audio-visual materials and interviews (Creswell, 2013, p.98, p.105). Yin (2014, p.10-11) states that any research question beginning with 'why' should direct the researcher to use an explanatory case study approach. In this instance, it will offer the researcher the opportunity to carry out direct observation of museum sites and to conduct multiple interviews with museum professionals if possible (Yin , 2014, p.12). However, during data collection, interviewing museum professionals from the IWM proved to be difficult. As a result, I interviewed one senior curator from the IWM. Furthermore, I intended to interview other museum professionals who curate exhibitions related to violence against women. Initially, some showed interest but, later they stopped responding to my emails. It is difficult to know why these were not responsive but it could due to the sensitive nature of the research topic or they were busy and could not commit the time for interview. Yin (2014, p.12) lists the advantages, or what he describes as a "unique strength" of the case study approach, which is "its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence documents, artefacts, interviews, and observation". In a similar vein, Denscombe (2010, p.6) explains that case studies are appropriate to help us "understand the complex relationship between factors as they operate within a particular social setting".

The case study is therefore deemed to be the most suitable strategy for achieving the research objectives. For this research, it was important for the researcher to be able to access the required data sources and respondents and entailed gaining approval from museum authorities and relevant personnel (Denscombe, p.7). This research was approved

by the University of Leicester's Research Ethics Committee. Therefore all the interviewees signed their consent on an Informed Consent sheet so that the researcher could use their opinions and words for this research. Furthermore, the Head of Archives at IWM permitted use of the past exhibition archives for this research. I have visited the archive room at IWM more than ten times to look at the exhibition materials, such as exhibition proposals, staff emails, newspapers, photographs, labels, exhibition layout, catalogues etc. The research seeks to generate valid data before any interpretation is attempted. When examining such data, readers can therefore develop their own understanding of the issue based on solid evidence (Stake, 1995, p.87). This research will allow for a detailed appreciation of this case study gained through interpretation and the collecting of interpretations (Stake, 1995, p.85-99): thus, "most contemporary qualitative researchers nourish the belief that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered" Stake (1995: p. 99).

4.4.1 Permanent exhibitions

In relation to the permanent exhibitions, I draw upon Mason and Sayner's scholarly work to understand silences at the IWM. I gathered data such as photographs, interpretation panels, online materials from all the galleries at the IWM using a visual and textual analysis method. However, I decided instead to focus on exhibitions related to history of war and its impact on people's lives. Some exhibitions in the museum were not relevant to explore silences on the topic of wartime rape. For instance, '*The Lord Ashcroft Gallery*', is dedicated to the heroes of war, their 'boldness, aggression, leadership, skills, initiative and endurance' (IWM, 2017, p.57). The other example is the '*Secret War*' gallery which dealt with war spies and the secret security service (IWM, 2017, p.46). This is agreeing with Mason and Sayner, saying that if an exhibition is clearly stating that it is concern with a particular matter, then researching silence will not make sense. Gathering data from the permanent exhibitions required repeated visits to the museum. The process of viewing exhibitions, taking notes and photographs of different displays and labels took more than 15 visits to the museum site. In each exhibition I started to gather information about different themes keeping in mind the ways in which women are represented compared to men. Therefore, I attempted to locate if there was any representation or indeed absence of the

topic wartime rape. Which aspects of war history had greater prominence, how hierarchal relations between genders shaped each theme, whose stories were being told, what kind of interpretive elements were used, and what is the intended messages. Thus, the goal was to examine each exhibition individually to understand the pattern of silences. The research also examined the representation of women in the museum displays to understand what narratives were absent or silent. Therefore, relevant exhibitions for this research included: *'Witnesses to War'* which is displayed in the museum's atrium, *'First World War'*, *'Second World War'*, *'the Holocaust'*, and finally *'Contemporary Conflicts'*. I took more than 1000 photographs from these exhibitions, and I organised them according to each exhibition and theme. This serves as visual resource to help in analysing the exhibitions and its related texts. Regarding visitor data, I was not permitted to conduct interviews due to the sensitive nature of this topic. Furthermore, some visitors might have personally experienced sexual abuse and therefore such an approach may have the potential to traumatise some individuals. Hence, visitors' response was not a focus for this research. This research examines silences through a deep and detailed investigation of the politics of representations, and, whilst visitors were not interviewed, I observed visitors responses and reactions and took notes of their reactions to the exhibition displays.

4.4.2 Temporary exhibitions and archive research

Considering archive research, this research investigated past exhibitions that dealt with women in a war context at the IWM. The goal was to consider how women have been presented and in what ways? This research also sought to explore if the topic of wartime rape was fully presented and discussed in any of these temporary exhibitions. The first document I requested from the IWM's Archivist was exhibition records which I received from her. That document includes a table which lists the exhibitions that have taken place at the IWM between 1918 and 2014. However, this list only contained the exhibition titles because not everything was completely documented. Nevertheless, this document provided the first stage in the research and subsequently enabled me to a more in-depth focus when I was able to identify exhibitions that dealt with women.

A few months later the archivist provided another exhibition document which was concerned with genocide entitled '*Crimes Against Humanity*' this was an exhibition held at the IWM between 2011-2013. These exhibition records were the starting point in finding relevant documents for this research. In the first stage of the research, the exhibition records were fully reviewed to identify how many exhibitions were dedicated to women and genocide or dealt with human rights out of a total of 496 exhibitions. Then the relevant exhibitions were researched through the IWM website, and in the online news reports. The purpose therefore was to investigate the representation of wartime rape in each exhibition. From the records, seven exhibitions were dedicated to women from 1918 to 2011, and from the 1990s three exhibitions were presented: one considered the Bosnian war and two discussed genocide in general. Therefore, conducting archival research was necessary to understand how often women were presented in these exhibitions. This could reveal if the perspective of women civilians who suffered during war was presented? And, if so, to what extent? The exhibition archive had not been fully completed in the IWM at the time of my research. Repeated delays in response from the museum archivist was largely due to her heavy workload. The IWM were (as at 2017) in the process of sorting and cataloguing the exhibition archive, but, unfortunately, very little had been catalogued. I was advised to request a specific exhibition from (no more than 3 at a time) the exhibition records. At the start of 2018 I successfully acquired exhibition records for 2 exhibitions from the archive documents, hence, the total under examination was five temporary exhibitions. At this point, it was appropriate to focus on exhibitions from the 1990s onwards, looking for topics that covered war where civilian women faced sexual violence on a large scale. Thus, the wars of Bosnia and Rwanda and exhibitions concerning genocide were my preferred choice. This was predominantly because these wars stirred the UN to consider sexual violence against women a war crime, and to issue a law condemning the perpetrators. Thus, the objective was to look for topics that cover women's experiences during war and to understand the ways in which women have been presented in the IWM. The document revealed that only a few exhibitions discussed women's role in war, and considerably less on the Bosnian war. Therefore, the selected exhibitions chosen for this research project were: Bosnia: *Paintings by Peter Howson* in 1994, *Crimes Against Humanity* 2002, and

Women and War 2003. The research began with the '*Women at War*' exhibition archive as this exhibition was a major study of women in wartime. More importantly, however, it was the first exhibition at the IWM which was entirely dedicated to presenting women's experiences of war since the 1970s. It was focused on women in uniforms, especially from Britain and commonwealth countries, emphasising the concepts of heroism and sacrifice. That exhibition will be analysed further in Chapter 6, which will discuss the notion of patriotism and heroism in war museums.

The second exhibition was '*Bosnia*' which displayed artworks by the commissioned British artist Peter Howson. Whilst the exhibition was a tremendous success according to the artist it did spark controversy in the press at the time. This was most notably because the museum refused to purchase a painting that depicted sexual violence against Bosnian women. The museum claimed that there was no evidence of any rape incident despite all the atrocities that Bosnian women faced at the time of the war (IWM exhibition archive). In that case, this raises serious questions about the attitude of the museum and what kind of evidence does the museum require in order to discuss this subject? Perhaps, the museum is not comfortable with acquiring a painting for their permanent collection which portrays sexual violence against women? If so, why? Perhaps it is related to the image of soldiers or fighters in the public's eyes? Or is it simply too violent for the museum? In other words, does that depiction of rape in conflict clash with the notion of patriotism? This theme will be discussed in Chapter 6. The third exhibition was a short film entitled '*Crimes Against Humanity*' which ran from 2011 to 2013. This temporary exhibition was a positive example of the representation of a difficult subject. This included footage of interviews with survivors and experts talking about the war crimes trial where sexual violence was being used as a weapon during conflict. This temporary exhibition (which is discussed in Chapter 6) illustrates how it is possible to address these critical issues about war, and, pointedly, its ability to present war from a different and more humanitarian perspective. In 2018 I managed to visit the archive several times to look at two more exhibitions, '*Eleven women facing war*' in 2014 and '*Genocide, landscape, memory*' in 2000. Both exhibitions have displayed photographs.

To augment the archival research, this thesis investigated past exhibitions of the IWM starting from the 1990s, searching for articles and reviews by specialist and non-specialist press. For example, the '*Eleven Women Facing war*' exhibition, which displayed photographs of women who survived war, was opened in 2014 at the IWM. The photographs were taken by the British photographer Nick Danziger who covered stories of eleven women who lived in various conflict zones. The importance of that exhibition is not only its critical approach in focusing on women who survived the brutality of war, but also its distinctive way in overcoming any potential sensitivity that might surround this subject (see Chapter 6). Discussing this exhibition and drawing on other examples will lead this research to focus on the potentiality of artistic strategies for representing controversial or ethically sensitive subjects. That discussion will be supported by an interview with the renowned artist Ala Bashir who exhibited a painting of wartime rape in Qatar Museum of Modern Art (Doha) in 2014.

4.4.3 Interviews

Conducting several interviews benefit this research by allowing museum professionals to express their views and opinions on this topic of interest. By listening to their different perspectives a richer appreciation of the research topic can be developed. Informant interviews is used at the museum site. Nevertheless, interviews did not constitute a central part of this research due to difficulties in contacting museum professionals and a lack of response to be interviewed. It is important to bear in mind that this might be due to the sensitivity of the topic at hand, or it could be because of some political issues and its connection to human rights violations. I interviewed two museum professionals from the Women's Museum, Aarhus Denmark and the IWM, London. I also interviewed an artist regarding his artwork, which discussed wartime rape and an academic who talked about the philosophical perspectives of wartime rape. However, these interviews were not the main focus of this research, in terms of the interpretation of silences at the IWM. Rather, it serves to complement the thesis by supplementing a wider analysis. Yin (2014, p.73) has outlined the interview approach for case studies: the researcher should ask the most appropriate and effective questions, which in turn should generate relevant findings that lead to further

critical questions. When this occurs, the research is on the right path. The researcher should also pay attention to all details during the fieldwork and listen carefully to the interviewee by focusing on her/his actual words, so that an understanding is gained, hence interpretation is embedded in the interviewee's perspective of the subject (Yin, 2014, p.74).

Creswell (2014, p.163) offers some additional guidelines for the researcher to follow. First, it is important to select open-ended questions that offer respondents the opportunity to focus on the subject. Second, the researcher should decide who could answer such questions and set out to select relevant interviewees (Creswell, 2014, p.164) the selection criteria should account for a respondent's ability to share their ideas or views. This research involved one-to-one interviews with experts in the museum and art sector. Suitable places for conducting interviews were selected; Informed Consent forms were prepared for interviewees which they signed; and participants were informed of the interviews time and place (Creswell, 2014 p.166). The interviewer listened carefully, did not interrupt the participant and only audio-recorded the interview with permission of the interviewee (Creswell, 2014, p.166).

As for research ethics, Denscombe (2010, p.172) stresses that consent is a crucial part of the research interview: consent should be achieved openly on the basis that interviews will generate relevant data for the purpose of developing the research. Moreover, Denscombe (2010, p.173) and Oakley (1981, p.32) contend that the researcher should distinguish between the interview and regular conversation and that interview questions should be clear and directed. From a feminist point of view, Oakley (1981, p.41) argues that a non-hierarchical relationship with the interviewee is best for achieving research objectives. A semi-structured interview approach was adopted for this research project. Semi-structured interviews allowed respondents to focus on the subject and relevant questions, but, at the same time, the format was flexible enough to allow participants to offer a wide range of relevant ideas and views.

For the first interview, I went to Denmark to meet with Merete Ipsen, the director of the Women's Museum in Aarhus, regarding the 2010 exhibition, *It's not your fault*. This exhibition intentionally addressed and discussed the issue of rape as sexual assault against women, and raised questions about the prevention of rape as well as the need to change

attitudes to rape so that victims can improve their life. This interview provides a positive example of museum practice that dared to discuss the topic of rape from a feminist perspective, despite any potential social constraints, such as considering this subject as sensitive or as taboo. This part of the discussion was presented in the literature review in Chapter 3. The second interview at the IWM was with the senior curator, Hilary Robert. She is a specialist in the history and practice of conflict photography and the discussion surrounded the representation of wartime rape in the museum. This interview considered possible reasons for the absence of this subject (wartime rape) in the IWM. Other aspects of the interview discussed museum authority and censorship, the need for evidence to present this subject, and the exhibitions that tackled the topic of impact on women in war. This material is relevant to the case study findings discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. Artworks are predominately used in war museums chiefly in temporary exhibitions, so, I conducted an interview with Professor Ala Bashir regarding his painting '*Raped*', which depicted the issue of wartime rape against women.

4.5 Data analysis

Data analysis examined the approach at the IWM and their strategies in representing war and to examine the ways in which women were represented in their permanent exhibitions. The research sought to understand women's positions within these exhibitions, for instance, are they portrayed or displayed as victims, survivors, heroes, or supporters? This lens helps to trace the patterns in which women are represented, and in identifying silences on the subject of wartime rape. This research paid particular attention to notions of patriotism and gender relations in shaping each exhibition, as well as what the stories displayed suggest. Porter (2012, p.64) notices that men's stories do demand greater focus and importance in both museum discourse and display, whereas women tend to function as background support to the men's actions. Therefore, such representations often reveal the deep-rooted stereotypes between masculine and feminine roles (Porter, 2012, p.64). As a result, the ways in which museums tackle sexual differences in its narratives and representations can reveal silences (Porter, 2012, p.65). Therefore, tracing museum's representations of women against those activities associated with men can reveal the ways in which women are

marginalised (Porter, 2012, p.66). Looking at a range of museums, Porter (2012, p.66) states that there are some disconnections between women's and men's representation, where men's stories are frequently presented in harmony whereas women's representation do not appear to be organised 'coherently'. This can result in an ambiguous and 'idealised' representation of women. The collected data from the visual analysis of the exhibitions was organised systematically into harmonic categories for each exhibition (Yin, 2012, p.15, and Mason, 2002, p.147). Data was then arranged into sets according to the methods they were generated from. First, data from each exhibition was divided into seven sets of categories: i) the exhibition title, ii) location, iii) main themes, iv) the interpretive elements of each theme, v) main concepts, vi) women's representation within the theme, and vii) notes on the most prominent aspects in each theme. Drawing on Mason and Sayner's approach in researching silence on difficult topics, the data intends to show the focus of each exhibition, which stories are being emphasised or highlighted, and which ones are being silenced or marginalised, i.e. whose voices are being heard and whose are not? Ennals' (2007, p.628) approach in deducting silences - where there are two sets of information where one of them hides the other - will depend on the level of sensitivity of the topic. As a result, conflicting or sensitive subjects will ordinarily be silenced. There becomes apparent if we consider the following stories: on the one hand we have the narrative of patriotism, heroism and soldiers suffering whereas on the other hand we have the stories of victims and wartime rape. Thus, this set of information which comprises both challenging and sensitive subjects may be ignored. Analysing data will require reflection on the forms of silences and scholarly material derived from the literature review. This research presents the data and its key findings in the following chapters using 'thick description' of the exhibitions and supplemented through the use of selected exhibition photographs.

Chapter 5 -The Case of the Imperial War Museum (IWM)

'See war through the eyes of the people who lived it. Be moved. Be inspired. Be transformed.' (IWM London, 2019).

5.1 Introduction

The statement from the museum's website above might imply that the IWM is reflecting or considering the stories of all people who lived through war or were impacted by its aftermath and consequences. This could encompass stories of political decisions or viewpoints regarding war, soldiers, battlefields, civilians, victims, and survivors, from all sides of conflict. It is also suggesting that these stories would have a moving, inspiring and transformative impact on its visitors. Inspiration, in this sense, can be understood as the impact of the represented stories on museum visitors. It can also be considered as what the museum wants visitors to see or to feel through these stories. What these stories say or do not say can reveal the silences within the museum's exhibitions. Thinking about the kind of inspirational impact the museum wants to deliver through its exhibitions its permanent exhibitions were worthy of note. In particular, what stories or concepts are emphasised, and which ones are not? One of the museum panels in the WWI exhibition pointed to the changing nature and viewpoints of different generations regarding war (see panel in question, Figure 5.1). This raises the question: to what extent has the IWM tackled these differences in viewpoints in its permanent exhibitions? This is especially important nowadays when people may perhaps be more informed of the atrocities committed against civilians in conflict zones, through, for instance, media such as TV news, press reports and videos or images from the internet.

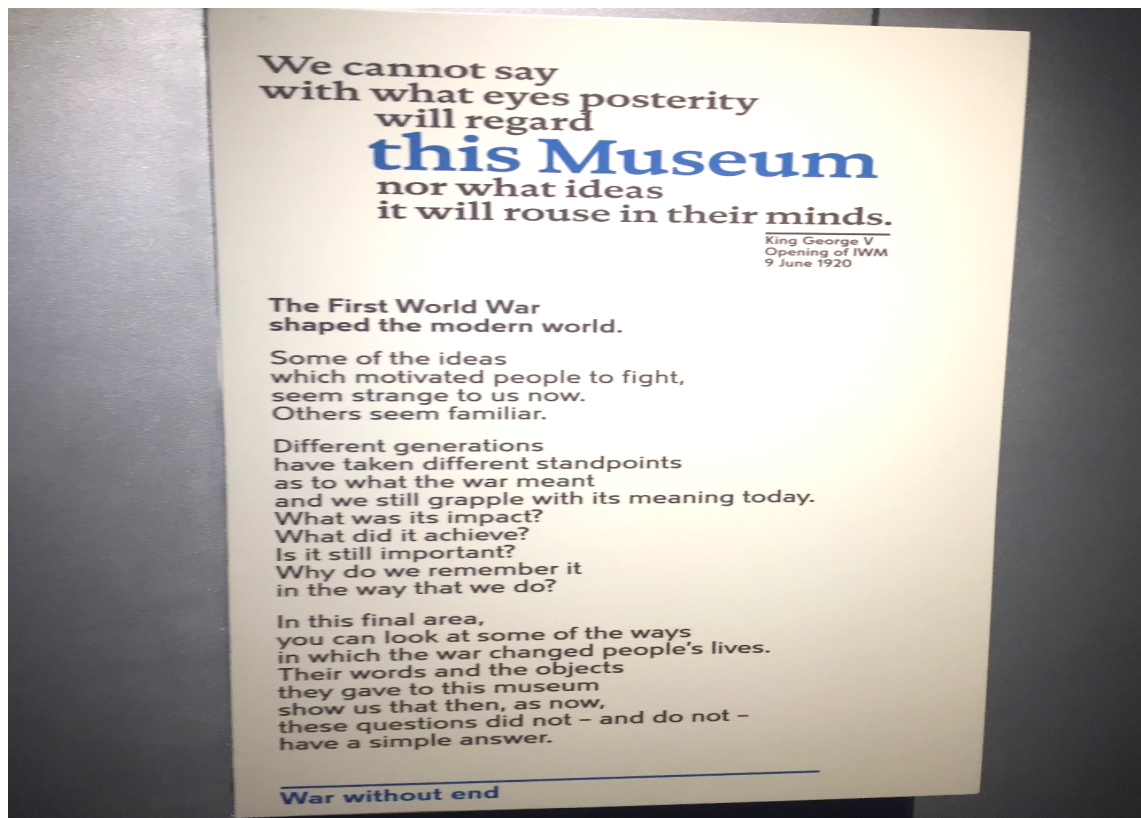


Figure 5.1: IWM, Panel at First World War gallery, talking about the changing views of different generations regarding war. Source: Author (Almisnad,2017).

Thus, the importance of the research topic came from the fact that wartime rape is considered an act of violence which primarily targets civilian women and girls regardless of which side of the war they belong. Believing in the importance of equal human rights for all of humanity, this research argues that civilian victims of all wars, and from all sides, have equally the right to be recognised. No civilian victim or survivor chose to be part of any war or conflict (see Figure 5.2). The violent act of rape against civilian women has been, and remains, used as a tactic of war in order to take revenge and humiliate the opposition. Wartime violence against women and other civilians constitutes an important part of the history of war which should be recognised and presented in museums in order to offer a broader view of history for the museum visitor. With the changing viewpoints of younger generations and the advancement and awareness of human rights concepts and goals it seems that museums should not shy away from confronting this subject.

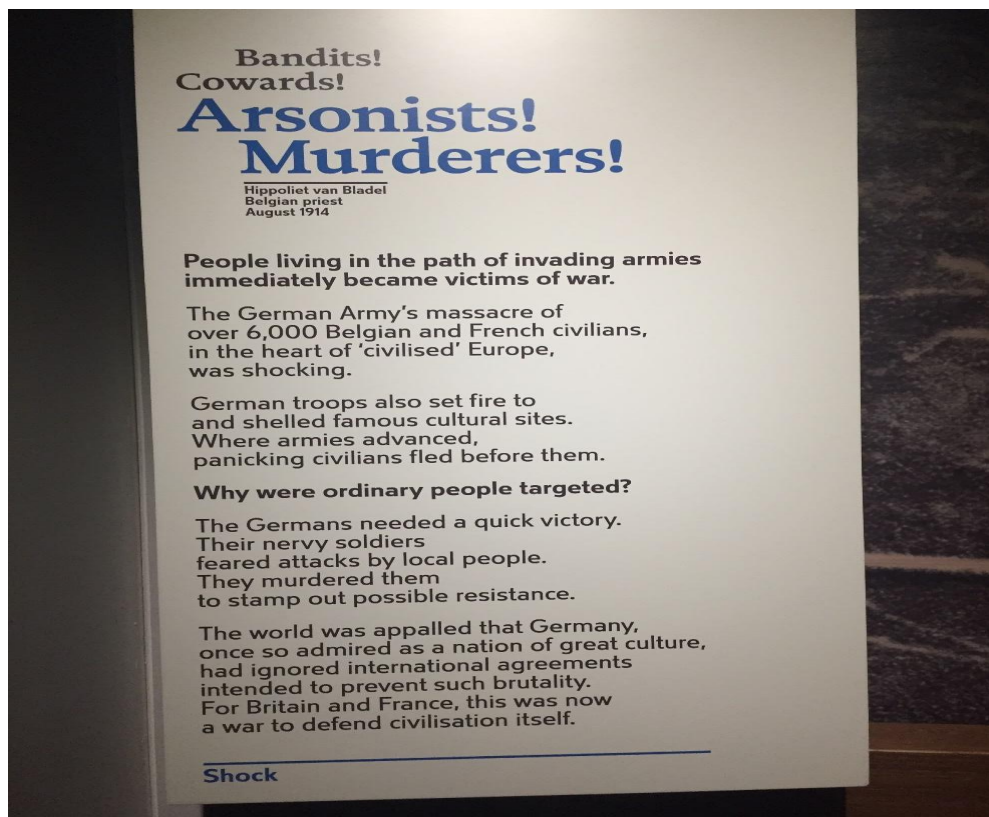


Figure 5.2: Panel from First World War gallery, talking about the war impact on civilians, IWM. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).

Throughout the 1990s recognition of wartime rape as a crime against humanity was recognised, most notably after the Bosnian and Rwandan genocidal wars. Indeed, acts of violence against women came to light in subsequent wars too. Therefore, this chapter investigates the representations of wartime rape in all the permanent exhibitions at the IWM. This will be achieved by comparing what the museum currently represents against what is documented in the historical records concerning sexual violence against women. The aim of this comparison is to provide a clear image of the museum's silences on the subject of wartime rape. However, whilst these two exhibitions occupy a small space in the IWM, they are nonetheless important in terms of illustrating the museum's response to the worldwide condemnation of crimes against humanity (wartime rape and genocides).

Therefore, this chapter analyses these smaller spaces exploring how the museum tackled the issues of war crimes.

This chapter examines silence on the subject of wartime rape in the IWM's permanent exhibitions. A visual analysis method (providing thick description of each permanent gallery) will be employed. The purpose is to explore the ways in which the IWM has tackled the issue of war and to what extent it discusses the subject of wartime rape. Then, this chapter will provide a discussion to consider and scrutinise the findings. In this chapter, I argue that the topic of wartime rape is silenced in the IWM permanent exhibitions. This is due, largely in part, because these galleries chiefly focus on concepts including patriotism, heroism, sacrifice and pride, which is accomplished by exploring stories of politics and political leadership, soldiers, and weapons technology.

Instead, women are presented as patriotic supporters for the war effort. The activities of women does not receive the same attention as that of men, rather, the stories of women appear in the context of patriotism in support of the main concepts of each story and exhibition narrative. Unmistakably the permanent exhibitions neglected those stories of civilians as victims of war in general, and sexual violence against women in particular. These silences are due to multiple factors including the type of objects displayed from the museum's collection and the ways in which they were organised and arranged. Curatorial choice of what to exhibit or what to exclude are also a key factor. For instance, a collection that includes a large number of heavy weapons or soldiers' belongings will logically result in a focus on stories related to battlefields, heroism, patriotism and sacrifice. Another factor is that war museums often function as memorial sites for soldiers which honours their sacrifice and service (Winter, 2012: p. 152). This, in turn, leaves no room for victims and survivors' stories. Consequently, narratives on victims stories could divert attention from the heroic image of soldiers. A deliberate effort to avoid discussions about war crimes and who is accountable may also be an important factor in deciding what to display. This will be explored further in the next section.

5.2 The atrium space: ‘Witness to War’ exhibition

During multiple visits to the IWM between 2017 and 2018, I looked at all permanent exhibitions to investigate the stories of wartime rape against women or their silences. The initial findings from observations during 2017 revealed that there is no direct indication at all of existing exhibitions associated with this subject. Moreover, there are only a few indications of sexual violence against women were shown, for instance, in one display in the WWI exhibition, and two pictures of women who had been raped in the Holocaust exhibition. Interestingly, nothing was mentioned regarding sexual violence during the Balkan’s war. Why? As discussed in Chapter 2 it is known that rape was widely practiced against Bosnian women during that conflict. However, as mentioned in Chapter 3 it might be extremely difficult to explore all the aspects of an historical event, not least due to the considerable amount of information linked to it. Therefore, the curator needs to make decisions about what parts of the interpretation is presented so that it can fit the exhibition space. Following the ‘critical museum visitor’ method (Lindauer, 2008, p. 203), I began with the IWM’s website searching for representations of women with a particular focus on wartime rape. Using the critical museum visitor method when visiting the galleries and exhibitions was particularly helpful. This method facilitated in revealing the absence of this subject matter in the IWM’s museum displays (Lindauer, 2008, p. 204). Thus, observing which objects were displayed in each exhibition space, their purpose and who is benefiting or disadvantaged from these representations was distinguished (Lindauer, 2008, p. 204).

The first thing one sees at the entrance to the IWM are two large 15-inch guns. These are centrally situated directly in front of the museum building as a UK flag flies proudly in the centre (Figure 5.10). This imposing façade bestows an impression of state power, pride, victory, and superiority from the very start of the visit. Also, the two guns in front of the building provide an obvious signal of what the museum and its exhibitions are about - war and the power of weapons. Approaching the indoor entrance, all visitors are directed by a staff member to start their visit from the ground floor up to the fifth floor (Floorplan detailed in Figures 5.3-5.9 below), which allows the visitor to see the history of war in chronological order. This was very helpful in terms of understanding the development of the history of war from WWI onwards and how these wars resulted in the

current political environment. The ground floor (Level 0) contains the '*First World War*' gallery and the '*Witness to War*' exhibition which occupies a central space in the museum's atrium.



Figure 5.3: IWM entrance and building. Source: Asbury (2017).



Figure 5.4: Ground floor/Level 0 IWM, London. Source: Asbury (2017).

1

Second World War
A Family in Wartime
Turning Points: 1934–1945
 History Makers
War Story
 See programme on reverse
 Book Shop
 Cinema
 Lockers
 Shop
 Tea Room
 Open during peak periods
 (holidays and weekends)
 Toilet

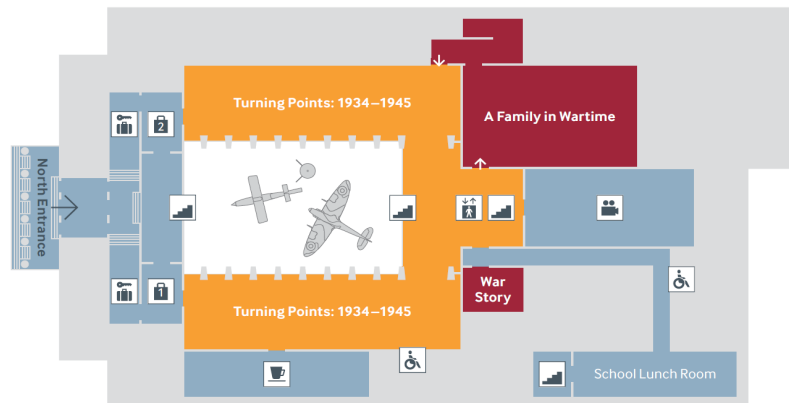


Figure 5.5: First floor IWM, London. Source: Asbury (2017).

2

History Makers
Secret War
Peace and Security: 1945–2014
 Conference Room
 Explore History
 Learning Centre:
 Teaching Rooms 1–4
 Research Room
 Toilet

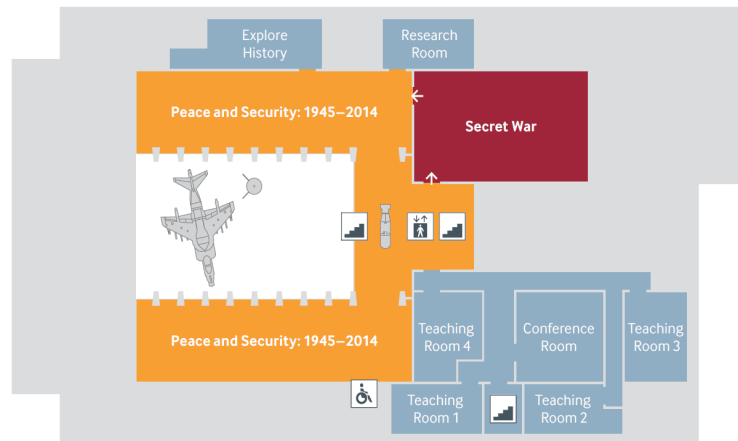


Figure 5.6: Second floor IWM, London. Source: Asbury (2017).

3

Special Exhibition
Horrible Histories®: Spies
 Until 4 January 2015
 Art and Photography
Galleries 1–3
 See programme on reverse
Gallery 4
IWM Contemporary
 See programme on reverse
 History Makers
Curiosities of War
 Exhibition Shop
 Tickets
 Toilet

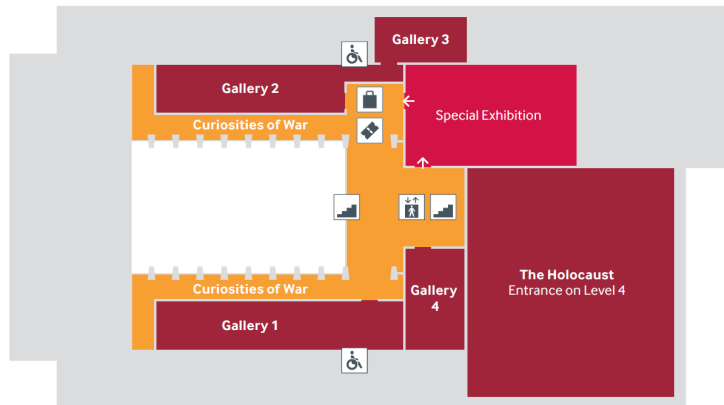


Figure 5.7: Third floor IWM, London. Source: Asbury (2017).

4

Second World War
The Holocaust
 Roof Terrace

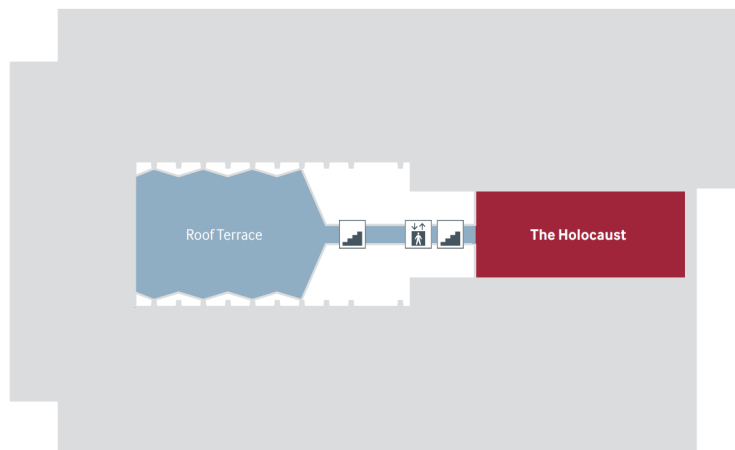


Figure 5.8: Fourth floor IWM, London. Source: Asbury (2017).

5

History Makers

**The Lord Ashcroft Gallery:
Extraordinary Heroes**

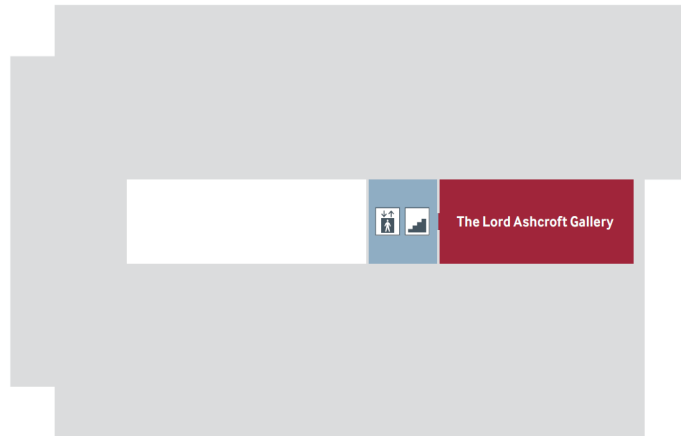


Figure 5.9: Fifth floor IWM, London. Source: Asbury (2017).



Figure 5.10: IWM entrance, image of the 15-inch guns. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).

The atrium exhibition displays a collection of heavy weapons that have been used in different wars, such as aircraft fighters, tanks, vehicles and missiles, all distributed in the centre of the museum's building (see figure: 5.11). The exhibition '*Witness to War*' works as an introduction to the museum, giving a glimpse of the atmosphere of war. The weapons on the display were used in real war, ranging from WWI to the Gaza Strip (IWM, 2017, p 8). Walking through this space visitors can find themselves standing underneath fighter planes which were deployed in war, as shown in figure 5.11, and surrounded by gigantic rockets, as well as other weaponry. Looking at this section of the IWM and thinking about this research topic, my first thought was: who was standing on the other side of these powerful and well-designed weapons, as described on their labels, were they other soldiers or civilians? These thoughts may not come to mind for all visitors, who may instead be more impressed with the size of these weapons or may have a keen interest in the technological functions of these objects and their history. For example, one artillery from WWII was dedicated as a memorial for the Soviet soldiers who used it while fighting (IWM, 2017, p.8). A detailed description about this tank was provided which included, for instance, its unique type and design, its power in the war field against the Germans, and its history. This object receives great attention from visitors; observations showed large audiences surrounding it and taking many photographs. This might be due to the historical importance of this object as it is considered a WWII memorial given that Soviet soldiers fought alongside British soldiers. In fact, it is a common practice for war museums to act as memorial sites, in order to determine social identity by honouring those who sacrificed their lives (Winter, 2012, p. 152). For this reason, war museums tend to focus on topics related to weapons and battlefields (Winter, 2012, p. 153).



Figure 5.11: The IWM atrium. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).

The same approach was used to describe other weapons, for instance one of the airplanes named ‘*Spitfire*’ (left side of Figure 5.11) was used during the Battle of Britain in 1940 during WWII. It is a shocking statistic that only six pilots survived out of every thirteen (IWM, 2017: 8). Winter (2012:153) comments that war museums dealing with WWI and WWII are most likely to silence the horrific images of victims. This was clear in that exhibition space in the atrium as there is no mention of where this plane dropped its bombs and if there were any civilian casualties during the battles that took place. All other weapons in this space have been interpreted in similar ways, describing the weapon’s model, its function, the way it was used and the soldier casualties only. In the same exhibition, there were three objects that talked about the impact on civilians. One is a Reuters Land Rover, a vehicle used specifically by the press corps hit by an Israeli rocket on the Gaza Strip in 2006, during which one journalist was badly injured (IWM website, 2019). This display contains photographs showing two injured men at the hospital, and the label also mentions that one of them was killed two years later while travelling in another press vehicle hit by an Israeli tank shell (IWM website, 2019). Another display shows the wreckage of a car which was used for a suicide bombing in March 2007 at a book market in

Baghdad, killing dozens of civilians (IWM, 2017, p. 8) (see Figure 5.12). The third object on display was a German V2 rocket which was deployed against London and other European cities; the one in the display hit Kennington Road (London) in 1945 killing 43 people (IWM, 2017, p. 8). These objects explicitly talked about civilian victims in general. Intriguingly, the only detailed story was concerning the journalist in the Reuters press vehicle. This exhibition worked well to introduce war as the visitors were confronted with all kinds of real war tools which may produce emotions for different visitors. For example, during the observation process through several visits to that exhibition from May 2017 to July 2018, I would notice different reactions from different visitors. For instance, young visitors would show some curiosity and excitement as they were looking at the actual weapons used during war. In contrast, some older visitors, looked seriously and acutely at the displayed objects, sometimes showing expressions of condemnation. This was particularly the case with the car rubble which resulted from a suicide bombing and the interpretation on the object labels which embody the atrocities of war.



Figure 5.12: The IWM atrium, a car ruins, used for suicide bombing in Baghdad. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).

5.3 First World War exhibition

This exhibition is located on the ground floor on Level 0 and it is the second gallery that visitors can navigate to learn about WWI. This gallery and the atrium space were refurbished and opened to the public in 2014 (Heritage Fund, 2014, Campbell, 2014). It consists of fourteen themes telling the story of WWI which are distributed chronologically around the space (see Figure 5.13). These themes encompass a lot of details about the politics of the war, soldiers' lives and their suffering during combat. Since this research examines women's representation at the museum with a particular focus on wartime rape, I will convey in detail how women are represented in each theme of this exhibition. Detailed examples of several themes will be outlined in order to present a clear impression of which concepts are being emphasised and if any are silenced. From the beginning of the exhibition visitors will notice that the displays are located on both sides of the gallery (right and left). This encourages visitors to move in a zigzag line to see different themes, and sometimes within the same theme (see Figure 5.13).

The first theme is titled '*Why War*' and provides an explanation of the aspects that led to WWI and shows a brief history of the British Empire and how people lived at that time. This theme occupied two medium sized rooms, the first part focused on the breadth and influence of the British Empire, the second part considered the rise of German technological power that resulted in the decision to go to war in 1914. The main interpretive elements used in this space were text panels, films, photographs, paintings, maps, and objects theme-related. These elements presented different details about life in Britain before the war and at the beginning of WWI. The implicit messages visitors might gain from this theme include notions on the greatness of the British Empire, how there was great pride of the Empire, and, the necessity for embarking on war.

In terms of the representation of women one text panel briefly mentions the 'Suffragettes violent campaign' to change the situation regarding women's right to vote in elections. This was in the context of people demanding change given the unjust distribution of wealth. Poverty and the lack of political representations of large portions of the population became an issue which stirred agitation and demands for fairness and equal

rights. Whilst the Suffragettes campaign received extensive interest and attention from the press and public, there were no details or objects related to it in this exhibition. Indeed, it is hardly noticeable in the gallery. This display choice could be understood to concentrate and spotlight the narratives and objects of men whereas women's political activities at this time are viewed in a less prominent view. This hierarchy of narrative and interpretation may be regarded as a museum silence on the political role women could play in society. Thus, this subject and theme might be ignored in order to free up more space for other topics which could be regarded as more important in the exhibition's display. However, as Mason and Sayner mentioned in the previous chapter this may be due to a matter of curatorial preferences or space limitations.



Figure 5.13: WWI Gallery Plan. Source: Author (Almisnad,2017).

The second theme is titled '*Shock*' and demonstrates the horrors of war and shows the huge number of casualties amongst the soldiers and emphasising their sacrifices for their country (Figure 5.14). This section focuses on the year 1914. This theme occupies a large space with detailed information about how soldiers faced war with deadly modern weapons. It contains seven displays, six of them dedicated to soldiers' stories and one talking about civilian casualties. The interpretive elements were varied. They include panels which explained the devastation of war, the loss of 1 million soldiers as well as the large number of casualties and the use of modern weapons, war crimes against civilians. Additional interpretation included details of the many different battles, soldiers' uniforms (representing each country which fought in WWI) and their belongings, war equipment, artillery, pictures of soldiers in battlefields, letters and official documents. The first display in this theme presents a range of soldiers' uniforms that represent each army that fought in WWI. The labels provided information about each uniform, how men were recruited in to the army, which battle they fought in, the loss of life, and the size of each army. In addition, some posters of soldiers' different uniforms were in the same display, with accompanying photographs, and several labels for each costume. Next to this display was a panel concerned with how soldiers were exposed to technologically-advanced dangerous weapons on the battlefield. Also, an installation of soldiers' figures carrying their weapons with light and sound effects gave a dramatic overview of a battlefield. The rest of the display continued discussing the type of weapons, soldiers' stories and suffering on the battlefield. This section placed great importance on soldiers' suffering, their bravery and the dangers they faced through exposure to advanced weapons. The key message then is one telling of the soldiers' courage and sacrifice.

In this theme, women were not represented in any displays whatsoever. Only one display mentioned briefly civilian victims, the purpose of which was to explain the reasons why Britain and its Allies were prompted to fight in WWI. The introductory panel titled '*Arsonists! Murderers!*' indicates that WWI had to be fought to protect Belgian and French civilians from German atrocities. This section and panel also mentioned the destruction of cultural sites (Figure 5.16). The display was relatively small and located in a dark corner opposite stories on soldiers' uniforms, which, in stark contrast, was fully detailed and lit

(see Figure 5.15). This suggests that this display (destruction of cultural property and civilian casualties) was afforded less prominence compared to others within the same theme. The display (Figure 5.16) contains two pictures of civilians trying to escape from soldiers, a picture of cultural sites which had been destroyed, five photographs of dead civilian men, quotations, one man mentions a woman holding a child. The same display case also contains a 42 cm shell used by the Germans. This display operated as a justification for WWI, discussing the amount of destruction cultural sites suffered and the large numbers of lives lost amongst the civilian population by the German army. Even though this display talked about victims in general terms it did not highlight or emphasise them or their stories. Thus, as the principal message was why there was a necessity for conducting war against the German aggressors. The topic of women in this gallery space was not the central narrative or theme and this reflects the curatorial interpretive choices that were used.

Regarding the topic of wartime rape, some indications of sexual violence appeared in a document located in the same display. This document, from December 1914, comprises four pages which recorded interviews with Belgian refugees and troops, who spoke about the German atrocities. The documents are displayed as an example of violence against civilians. For instance, some witnesses mentioned a girl who was raped by a German soldier who also killed her mother and brother. It reads: a 'woman aged 35 was taken to a public school at Louvain, stripped and violated by 14 German soldiers in the presence of her husband who was bound and was then shot', a violation of a man, 'two young girls seized in the street', a 'girl been violated'. It was hard to see what was written on these documents within the display case and the visitor must make an effort to look closely in order to be read some of these shocking statements. Also, the pages were placed on top of each other, which hid some of its information (see figure 5.17). Displaying these documents in such a manner could be understood that the information located underneath is perhaps not necessary for visitors to digest. The location of this display implies that it is less important than the others, as the visitor can move to other themes without noticing its existence. This gives the impression that the museum might not feel comfortable to seek to discuss openly the stories of victims and women who may have been violated. As a result,

they chose to tackle it briefly with no details or specific stories that discuss the experiences of these people. Here, the silence on these types of stories is clearly present and evident. This echoes with Winter's and Whitmarsh's argument that war museums act as a memorial site for soldiers rather than focus on stories about the victims of war (Winter, 2012:152). Thus, an incomplete version of history can be related to the process of maintaining silence to avoid tackling sensitive subjects such as wartime rape (Ennals, 2007: 630). In this display, the accompanying label gave general information about Belgian refugees, their numbers, and the destinations they chose to flee to as well as German atrocities. Yet, whilst this appeared several times in the document on display, sexual violence was not mentioned on any interpretation label in the gallery. The stories of civilians suffering and the destruction of cultural sites was employed as a supportive element to introduce the next theme. This theme detailed the necessity of fighting the war and the importance of recruiting more men to the army to save people.

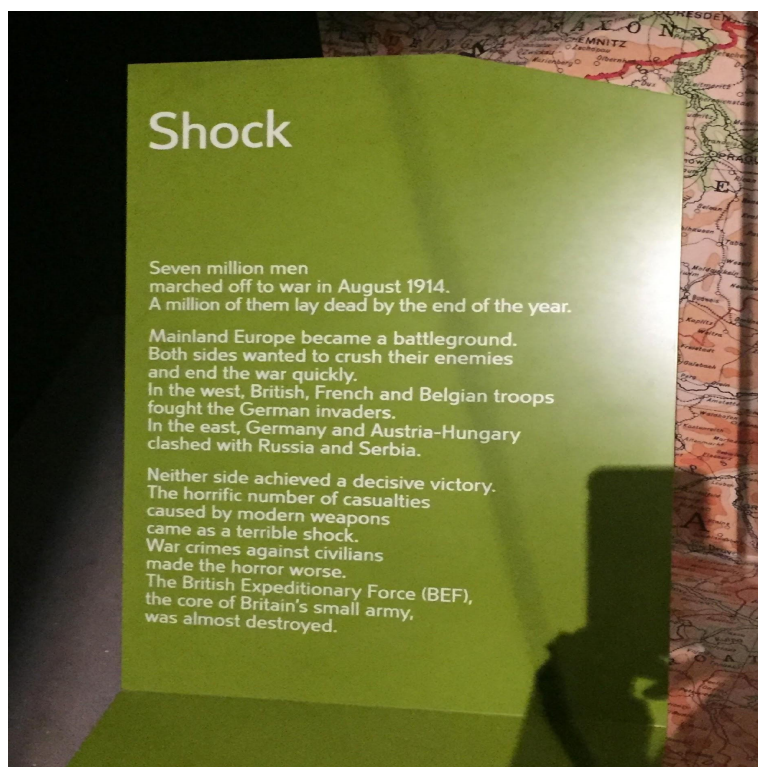


Figure 5.14: 'Shock' WWI exhibition, a panel explaining the war hero and the large number of casualties. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).



Figure 5.15: 'Shock' WWI exhibition, a display showing the uniforms of soldiers from WWI. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).

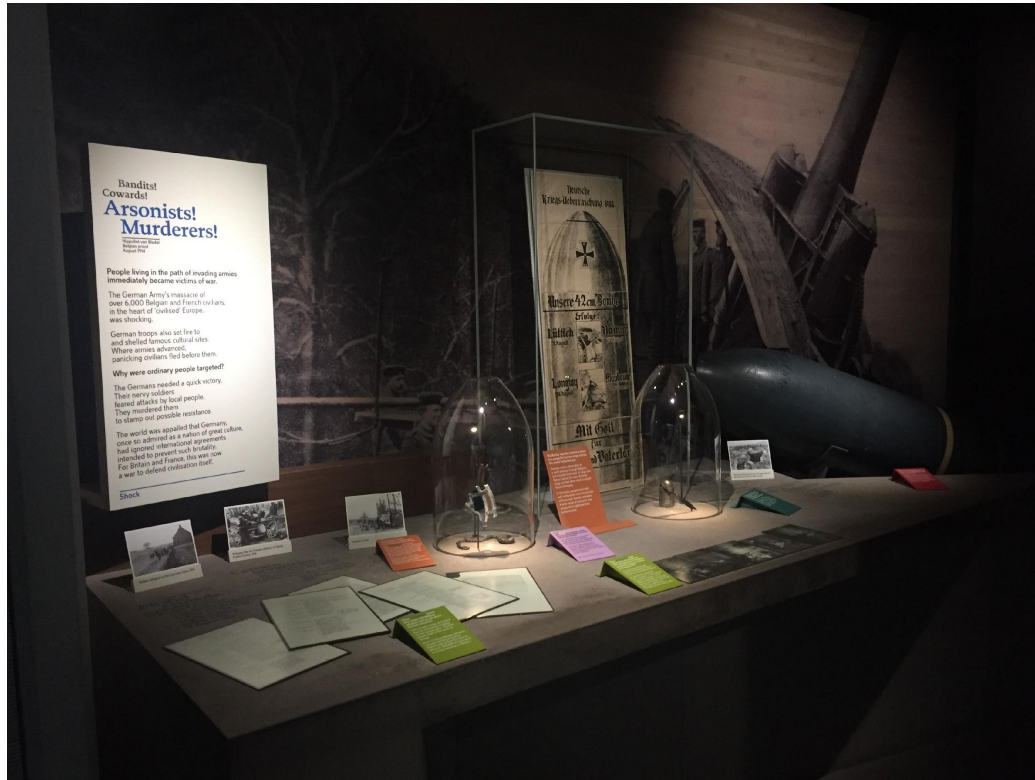


Figure 5.16: 'Shock' WWI exhibition. The only display that discussed the numbers of civilian casualties and destruction of cultural sites. Source: Author (Almisdad, 2017).

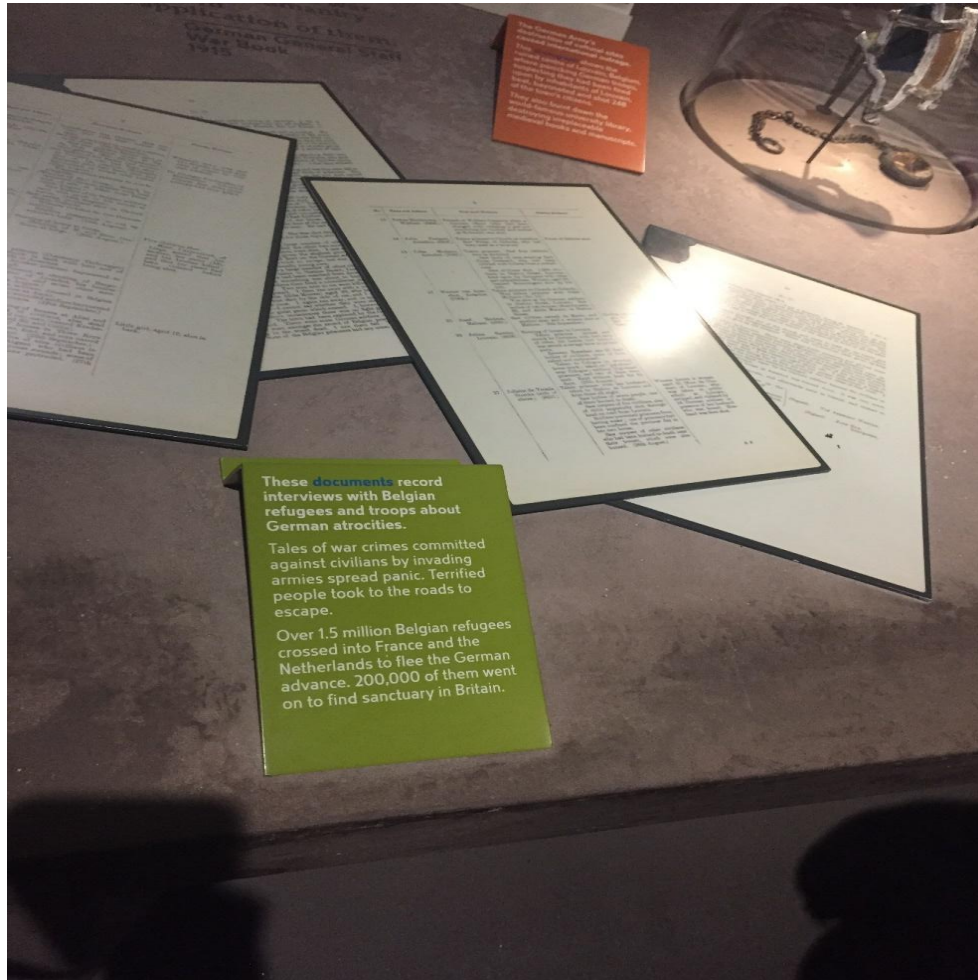


Figure 5.17: 'Shock' WWI exhibition. The historical document which recorded interviews with refugees talking about casualties of war and contained stories about sexual violence. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).

The title of the next theme was '*Your country needs you*' (Figure 5.18). The main concepts explored in this theme were patriotism, heroism, sacrifice, and pride. This theme provided detailed information about recruitment of new soldiers in to the British army. All the young civilian men who willingly volunteered to join the army were from Britain and its colonies. Men sacrificing their life for their King and country was one of the dominant concepts that occupied most of the space allocated for that theme. Patriotism and the urgency to serve the nation motivated men, and in some parts of this theme women, to make sacrifices for their country. The main interpretive elements used in this theme were text panels that talked about the ways in which the British people during war supported their country by

dedicating their time and money to the troops. This display also included some recruitment posters encouraging young people to volunteer, patriotic souvenirs, a projector showing a picture of recruitment posters on some buildings, and an interactive display that allows visitors to take the measurement test which was taken by volunteers who wanted to join the army in WWI. This theme demonstrates the solidity between the people and their government, and their willingness to support and protect their homeland despite the risks. Patriotism was evident as a key concept in this theme.

Women's contribution was mentioned but marginal compared to that of the men's contribution to the war effort. The section on women was located at the very end of the space and the visitor, at this point, might find it tiring to continue looking at all the details. In addition, the information was displayed in a more traditional way, which would potentially attract less attention. Indeed, this display contained multiple objects on the same shelf with their own related labels where a plain background wall might induce visitors to move on to the next theme. It seems that this part of the display has been put up together quickly, as there is not enough effort to make the design of this part as attractive as the start of this theme. There were five small labels with their related objects, showing the stories of specific women, reflecting the image of bravery, sacrifice, and their supporting role for the troops. For example, one label mentioned that women were not allowed to join the army, but they could serve as a journalist, with a related picture of a female journalist wearing an army uniform accompanying the troops in the tunnels. Also, a small display told the story of Princess Mary who encouraged people to fund her initiative to send Christmas gifts to the troops, which again marks the supportive role women played during war (see Figure 5.19). This display situates women in subordinative positions where their roles were concerned with supporting soldiers and their government in war initiatives.

In this sense, Porter (2012, p. 64, 65) suggests that in terms of representations, museums usually tend to show women in a subordinate or marginal role as helper or supporter for men, while men's roles are central and active. Another label tells the story of a British nurse, Edith Cavell, who worked in a hospital in Brussels during the German occupation. She was executed because she helped an Allied soldier. Her last words were: 'I am glad to die for my country' and confirms this notion of sacrifice, bravery and heroism.

The sacrifice here can be seen as a unique case of an individual's heroism and courage, which happens as an incidental circumstance, whereas in the case of soldiers, sacrifice in this exhibition can be understood as an inherited characteristic. The examples of women sacrificing their lives were rare in the exhibition compared to soldiers. The concept of heroism and making sacrifices are linked to the extreme conditions that during the war or on the battlefield (Alvarez and Escobar, 2012, p. 63). In the same theme, the story of two women who set up a first aid post in a cellar near the frontline Belgian village of Pervyse is presented. The two women spent three years treating hundreds of injured men, even under fire, and became infamous and helped secure donations for their work. This story might also reflect the concept of bravery and support. So, as Porter observed, women are appreciated and valued here because they react positively to support men. Women in this exhibition did not have central roles or contributions to play but are rather seen as reacting to activities of war. Finally, the story of Dr Elsie Inglis is told, a doctor who wanted to set up an all-woman medical team, which was rejected by the War Office in 1914. So, undefeated she set up the Scottish Women's Hospital on the fighting front instead, funded by the suffrage movement. These stories are in harmony with the themes content and supports the main concept that is concerned with patriotism. The stories of the women who sacrificed for the nation was acknowledged but was not as prominent as those of the men.

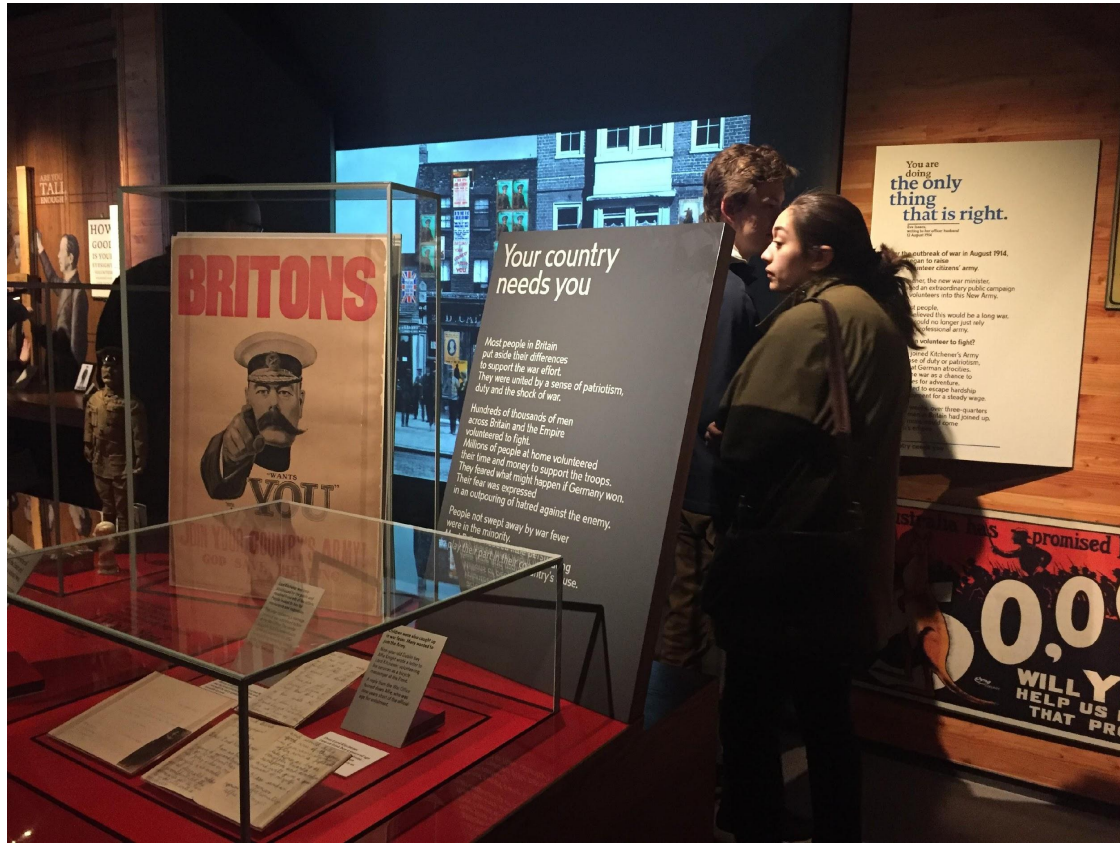


Figure 5.18: WWI exhibition. 'Your country needs you' theme. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).



Figure 5.19: WWI exhibition. 'Your country needs you'. This display showing women in a supporting role during war. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).

The next theme in this exhibition is 'Deadlock', and it was evident that this theme has a special importance in the WWI gallery. Not only is its size almost equal to the previous themes altogether (see figure 5.20), but, it contains more details and moving stories about soldiers suffering on the battlefield. The main concepts of this theme are soldiers' life in the trenches, the importance of the trenches in protecting soldiers, and the soldiers' suffering. The historical details were well explained and focused on the soldiers' experiences during the fight inside the trenches. Also, it looked in details at the techniques and technologies that they used to protect themselves and to defeat their enemies, facing all kinds of dangers. Trenches, maps and weapons were fully described. This theme attempted to show the strength of the British army and the pride of the advanced technology that was used to defeat their enemy. The main interpretive elements are tools used by troops while they were in the trenches, quotations, pictures of soldiers in the trenches, panels, trench signboards, an

interactive digital table showing details of the trenches, video, records, the trench game, weapons, soldiers' uniforms, and posters depicting illustrations of the war. Women were entirely absent from this theme, which can be justified by the fact that they were not permitted to fight in the trenches. This theme deeply and profoundly focused on the soldiers suffering and their bravery, providing personal stories through love letters or Christmas gifts as examples. The design and the stories might evoke different emotions for visitors, such as compassion, sadness in some parts, admiration, appreciation, pride and patriotism. The concept of patriotism was central in this gallery space, and it was shown through placing more importance on men activities.



Figure 5.20: WWI exhibition. Section of the 'Deadlock' theme. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).

Another theme, 'World War', investigated the spread of war in the British colonies, the focus was placed on soldiers suffering, the spread of disease in the colonies, and pride that Britain controlled the seas during wartime. The main interpretive elements were text panels,

interactive digital screens, heavy weapons and soldiers' uniforms. Once again, women were not part of that theme. Only a single story mentioned a woman who was rescued from a sinking ship and, surprisingly, the object on display was her camisole which she was wearing during the incident.

The next theme is '*Feeding the front*', and outlined the struggle in supplying the fighting front, conscription of men, and women taking up jobs in factories as much-needed munitions workers. Panels, posters, badges, letters, a projector, documents and photographs were the main interpretive elements in that theme. More than half of this display demonstrated the pressure that civilian men faced to join the army. This was shown through posters encouraging men to join the forces, panels explaining the demands for more soldiers and threatening letters sent to men who did not join the army. Regarding women's representation, this theme showed their positive contribution in supporting the government's efforts to supply the troops through their work in the munition's factories. It also showed pride in their achievements. Examples of the ways in which women were represented included a registration form filled out by 80,000 women to declare their willingness to do war work in order to release more men to fight; the label stated that only 2,000 volunteers were taken for war work. One of the labels explained that patriotism and good pay led 563,000 women to work in weapons factories alongside men. This patriotism was a clear signal that women's determination to have a positive role in helping their country was just as strong as it was for men. This label was accompanied by two posters showing female munition's workers as an example.

Another label talked about the facilities that were provided for women in the workplace, demonstrating the importance of their active contribution. This theme also showed different jobs that were newly occupied by women. For example, one of the labels talked about women's involvement in the police service with a photograph of a policewoman. Another showed a photograph of women in the football team of a munition's factory. Also, the display showed the first explosive shell made by women, showing that women were doing an important job to supply the army. The uniform of a female munition's worker was also on display to complete the image of the women's experience during WWI. This was to highlight the social changes that existed as women began to join

heavy industry jobs but also the discrimination they faced regarding equal wages. Here also women were presented as supporters reacting to the government's demands, providing help and being patriotic. They are appreciated and valued because they were doing men's jobs which enabled them to defend their country, thus, this contribution was considered important rather than staying at home during war. This emphasises the centrality of men and their roles, keeping women on the exhibition's margins. It can be said that the representation of women in some parts of this exhibition works as background images, though it is worth acknowledging that there are some efforts to highlight women's roles, but it did not go beyond traditional stereotypes related to gender, as mentioned by Porter (2012: 64, 65).

There are several themes in this overall exhibition where women are totally absent, for instance in '*Total War*' which occupied a substantial space in the exhibition. It provides details about battles in the Somme, advanced weapons and the British volunteer army. This display indicates the numbers of casualties amongst British, French and German soldiers, but there are no clear indications if there were civilian casualties during this five-month battle. Repeatedly, in most themes the display focuses on the soldiers' experiences and their sacrifice. The other theme which also did not provide any story on women is '*Life at the Front*', the second display that focuses on soldiers' life in trenches. This theme allowed visitors to walk through identical trenches to have a glimpse of the soldiers' experience.

The next exhibition theme, '*Machines against men*' was concerned with the advancements in weapons technology and tactics, the Battle of Ypres and War art. The focus was pride in the British made weaponry, details about war and soldiers, and the importance of the war photographers and artists in conveying the effort and sacrifices made by soldiers to the public. Finally, a theme called '*Seizing Victory*' chiefly discussed the defeat of Germany and the resulting armistice. It contained a film of the destruction of towns and lands in France as well as the loss of soldiers and information about their memorials. The story which focused on the destruction of towns completely neglected both women's and civilians experiences during the war, instead the attention was predominantly concerned with the soldiers' experience. However, it could be due to the lack of objects or documents related to civilians as demonstrated by Mason and Sayner (2019: 11). Thus, this

enables more space for soldiers' stories on this display. Or this can be explained as an usual attitude of war museums which are functioning as a memorial site as noted above by Winter, and therefore soldiers sacrifices and sufferings are the central story.

The remaining themes represented women as patriotic supporters. For example, '*At all cost*' was a theme where the main concepts focused on new leaders leading the way for victory, disability amongst soldiers, women working in men's jobs, raising money and taking loans to fund the war effort and Germany's attack on Britain. Women were introduced as a major part of that theme and indeed a whole display was assigned to them. The display focused on the supporting role of women who were filling jobs usually done by men. It showed posters to recruit girls aged 16-18 for clerical work and Food Ministry, a female nurse's uniform, a label which recognised the importance of female nurses in raising the spirits of male patients, a label on the increasing numbers of women workers with uniforms and posters depicting them, film and objects used by these women, and a label about women joining the British armed forces. One of the labels in this theme mentioned 1,414 British civilian victims which included women, children and men killed by German aircraft bombs. This part of the WWI exhibition showed that women's contributions to the war effort was crucial in order to fill the gap resulting from the absence of men who were involved in combat duty. The indication of civilians' casualties was general, as there were no other details or stories on those individuals (see Figures 5.21-5.24).

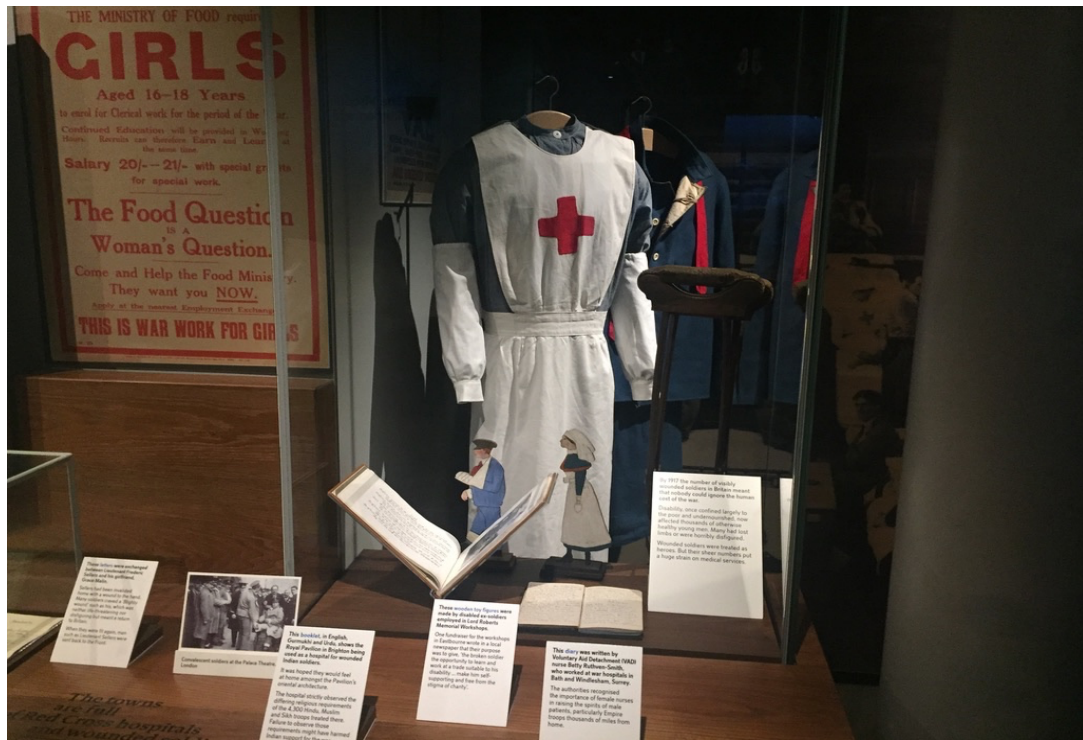


Figure 5.21: WWI exhibition. Source: Nurse's uniform. Author (Almisnad, 2017).



Figure 5.22: WWI exhibition. Source: Women working in a munition's factory. Author (Almisnad, 2017).

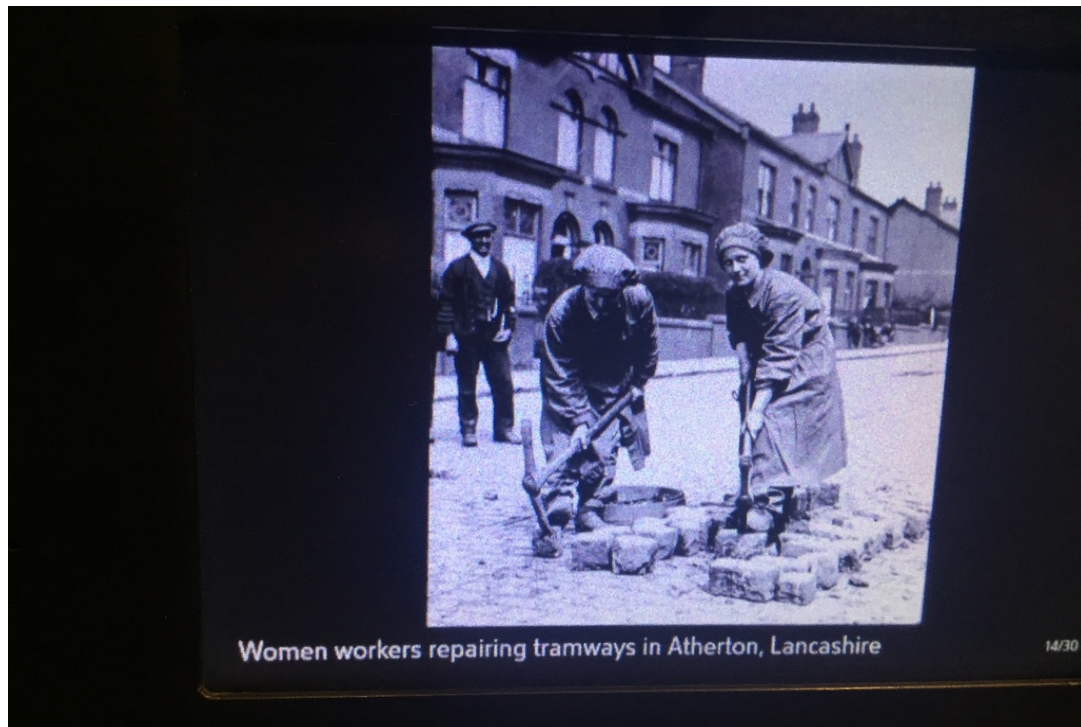


Figure 5.23: WWI exhibition. Source: *Women doing men's jobs*. Author (Almisnad, 2017).



Figure 5.24: WWI exhibition. Source: *Women's formal uniforms*. Author (Almisnad, 2017).

The next theme '*Breaking down*' presented stories surrounding the advancement of allied troops, the call for peace, voices against war, and the shortage of food. For instance, the topic of food shortage was highlighted by showing government efforts in limiting food waste, the need for women to save food using historical posters. This is, again, showing women in a supportive role, which was clear in several themes in the WWI exhibition. The last theme showed touching and moving stories of soldiers and their wounds, their suffering, sacrifice, families and partners. A greater focus was put on politicians and decisions making, war veterans and Remembrance Day. The title of that theme is '*War without end*' and women were represented through a poster and a quotation in relation to gaining their right to vote. There were also two photographs, one of a woman voting for the first time and the other which showed the first woman to take a seat in Parliament. These represented women as deserving of such achievements and success. Overall, the WWI exhibition emphasised soldiers suffering through different touching and emotive stories. Yet, women were presented as important supporters of the war effort and highlighted their patriotism and their courage in handling difficult jobs which they had no experience of before the war.

5.4 The WWII exhibition

The exhibition on WWII is located on the first floor, in a space shaped like the letter 'U'. It can be accessed through three entrances, at both ends and from the middle (see Figure 5.25). The visitors should start from the middle entrance to follow the chronological order of the exhibition, as the themes are numbered from 1 to 8. Walking through this exhibition, the visitor at first should move towards the left side to see themes 2 to 4, then they should go back to the starting point at the middle entrance, then walk towards the right side of the gallery to continue looking at themes 5 to 8. This could be rather confusing for visitors as it would be much easier to follow an exhibition in chronological order. It is generally easier, if the space allows it, for the visitor to move in one continuous direction, as is the case in the WWI gallery, or to move through different floors or rooms. The building's architectural design and/or the curatorial preferences might have played a role in this unusual choice of spatial presentation. The WWII exhibition will be refurbished and re-opened in 2021 to

expand it together with the Holocaust gallery across three floors (IWM, 2019). The new adjustment will situate the Holocaust narrative within the context of WWII. The museum had been planning these changes since 2017, and fieldwork of this research was conducted between 2017 and 2018. What was interesting in this gallery is that the curator, the historian and the designer who created this exhibition commented on the introductory panels of each theme, explaining and reasoning their choices and perspectives in creating the WWII exhibition (see the bottom of figure 5.25). This approach can be useful in terms of allowing the visitor to understand the rationale behind choosing certain objects in order for the museum to deliver a specific viewpoint by illustrating unique stories.

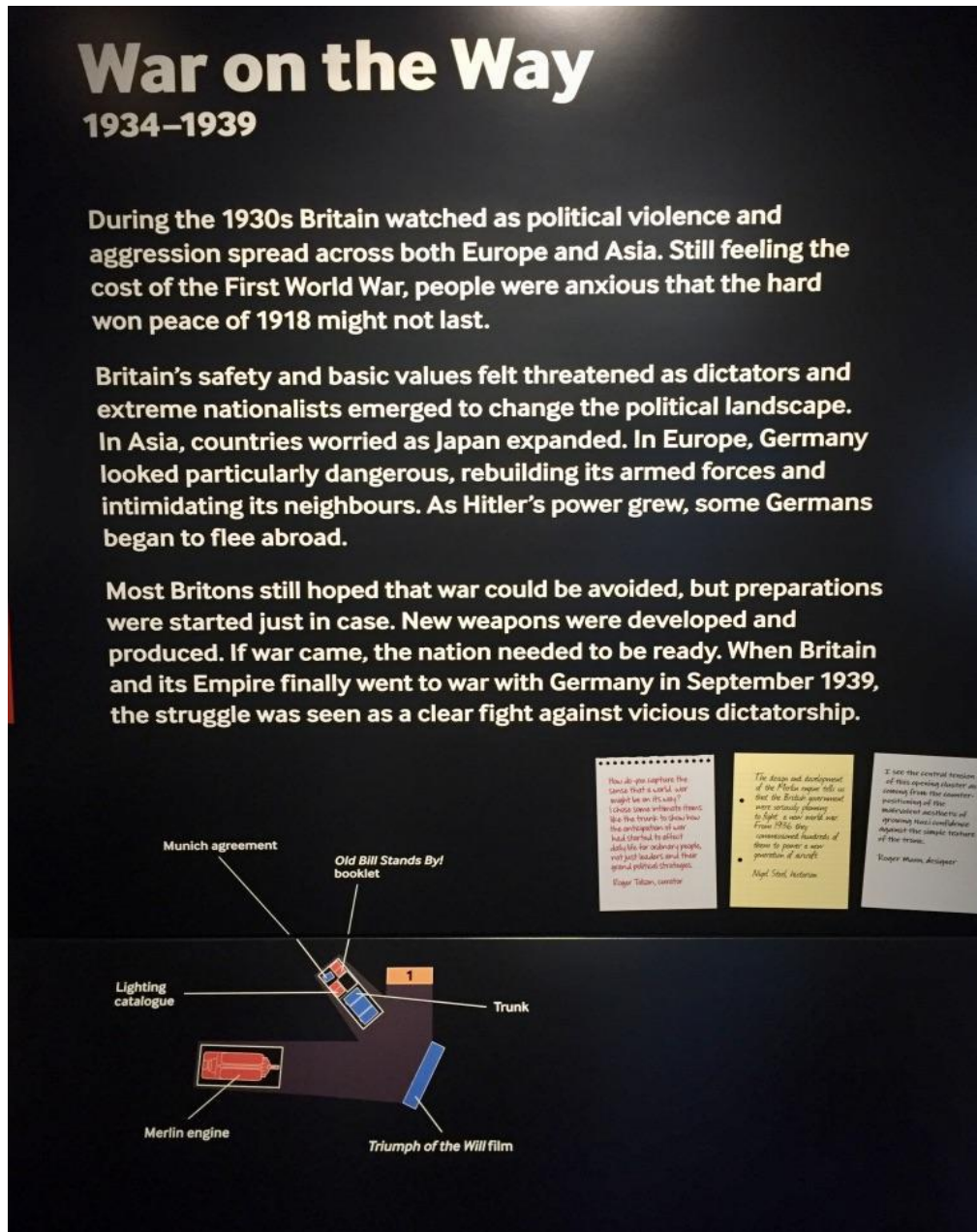


Figure 5.25: WWII exhibition, a panel highlighting the perspectives of the curator, the historian and the designer. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).

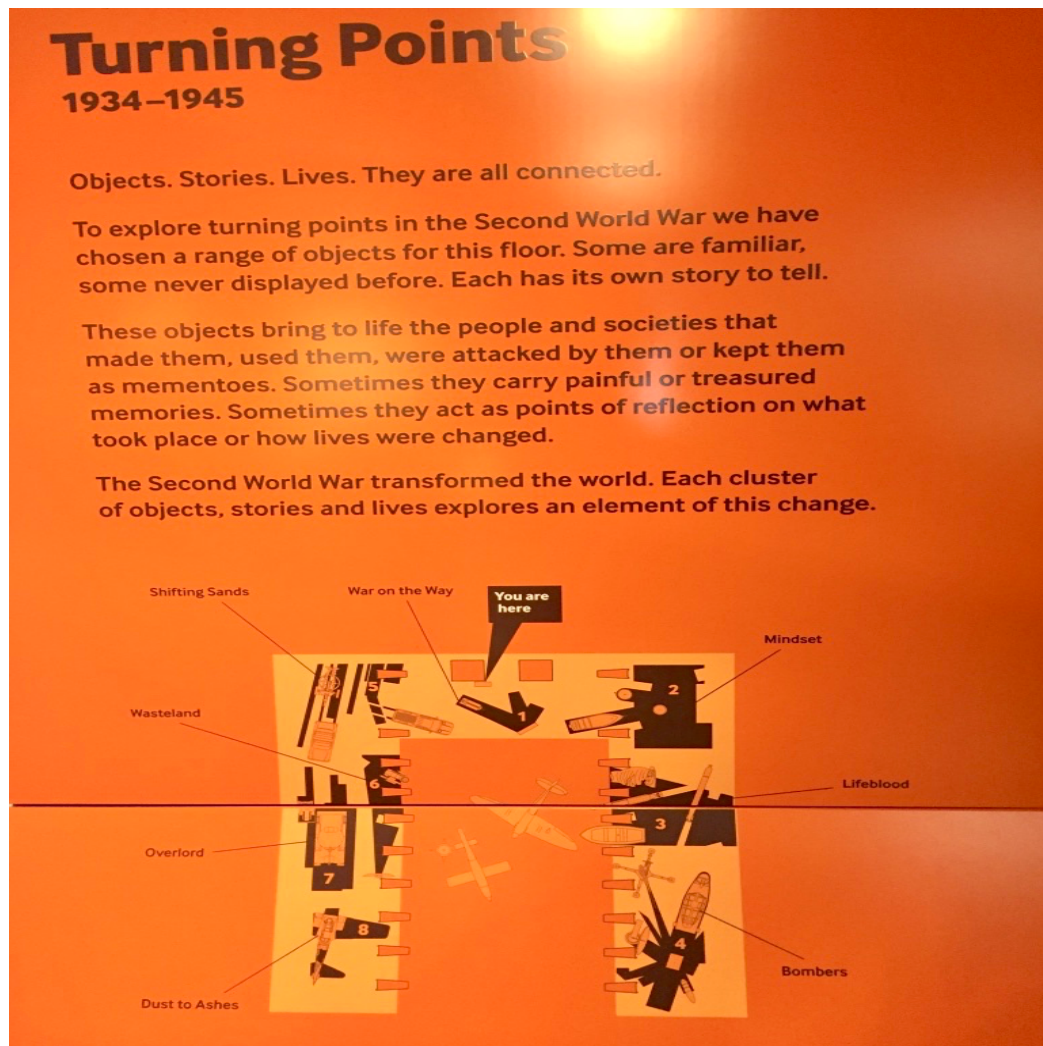


Figure 5.26: WWII exhibition, the starting point. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).

The exhibition started with the theme ‘*War on the way*’, focusing on the period 1934-1939 (see Figure 5.26). This theme’s main concepts are the early signs of war due to Germany rebuilding their army, showing the preparations made by governments around the world, as well as individuals, for this war and also focusing on the development of new weapons (IWM, 2017: 24, Exhibition panel). Comparable with the starting point of the WWI gallery, this theme looked at the reasons that led to the war, portraying the civilian situation and their preparations. This was accomplished by displaying three main objects: a documentary film showing a recording of the 1934 Nazi party congress in Nuremberg, the ‘Merlin’ engine used for British aircraft developed by Rolls-Royce, and a trunk belonging to a

Jewish family who wanted to escape the war (see figure 5.27). The three objects expertly provided an overview of the war, with a few details on display. For instance, the film represented the potential dangers including the growing threat from Germany the rising nationalism. Second, the aircraft engine which facilitated the British government in preparing for war, and the advancement in weapons technology. Finally, the trunk which signified the stories of the civilian population who did not want war, but were having to prepare for it. This object provided a touching story of two Jewish parents who planned to leave Germany before the war, following their daughters to Britain. In preparing to escape the war they sent this trunk with other belongings to Britain, but the war started just two weeks before they could leave the country. They died in Auschwitz, and their belongings including this trunk were received by their daughters in 1947 (Figure 5.27).



Figure 5.27: WWII exhibition, a trunk belonging to a Jewish family from Germany. Source: Author (Almishnad, 2017).

This theme also discussed briefly in one of its panels the Japanese army expansion in Asia, with no indication of the issue of 'comfort women' or comfort stations. Such an omission may be that this theme was a general introduction to WWII and that the topic of comfort women might be more suitable in subsequent themes.

The second theme occupied a larger space, portraying British preparations for war, and using different objects to illustrate how Germany planned to invade Britain, as well as how civilians endured the horrors of war. It showed the unity between the people of Britain and their government by introducing stories of civilians who helped carry soldiers from Dunkirk to safety using fishing boats . It also showed how people, including women, volunteered in the army and war effort. The objects in this section were varied, from head scarves used by women working in factories, to face masks used to protect people from gas, which were also used by children, air raid shelters to protect civilians, and parachute mines which were dropped on London. All of these objects displayed the strength of the people during the Blitz, and their unity and patriotism. This theme also focused on the changing routine of daily life especially for women who started to put their children in to nurseries so that they could go to work. This section placed more emphasis on the concept of courage, the enduring hardship of war, unity and patriotism. This theme provided a sense of fear and how people had the strength and capacity to adapt to new and uncomfortable situations. The visitor to this display might admire the sense of unity and the patriotism in this part of the exhibition.

The next theme '*Lifeblood*' was concerned with the war overseas, focusing on the British advancement in controlling the seas and the importance of the protection of trade routes which were crucial to survive the war. It also showed how the Royal Navy cut off the supply lines to Germany. In this theme, the curator highlighted the importance of the control over the contraband goods because of its role in feeding the war. This theme was more about the tactics of war and the technological advancements to effectively defeat the enemy. It also showed Britain's determination to win the war and 'bulldog spirit'. The next theme, '*Bombers*', continued to look at the tactics used against Germany and how the bombers hit strategic targets in enemy territories. This theme memorialises those who risked their lives during the bombing campaigns on cities in Germany. One of the soldiers

was honoured in this gallery as he bravely put his life in danger which was explained in detail. The concepts of pride, power (military advancement), and strength were strongly emphasised throughout this theme. Demonstrating the heavy bombing on Hamburg, a film displayed the combined assault against Germany, which resulted in the death of over 40,000 civilians and the destruction of most of the city. The label for this film described the horror that people faced during the assault, as many civilians were screaming as a result of the terrible burns they suffered. It went further, telling the story of a young woman who was screaming and running naked through the smoke, her feet were completely charred, and, when she finally reached safety she collapsed and died. This display showed the destructive impact of the war on civilians' lives, bringing together the real images of the war. The visitor at this point could see the other face of war when vulnerable and defenceless civilians were unwillingly stuck in the middle of combat and could not do anything to save themselves. The curator tried to create the scene of the contested space where the Allies dropped bombs on their enemy, who in turn used their anti-aircraft defences on Britain. Yet, most of this gallery focussed on technological advancements in weaponry to defeat the Germans. It was noticeable that the technical advancement in weapons and the war tactics gained a special importance when telling the story of the war. Although the issue of the impact of war on civilians was highlighted it was not covered extensively. This tendency to focus on the technical aspects of war might relate to the nature of the displayed objects, which were mainly different kinds of heavy weapons used during the war.

Moving to the other side of the exhibition, where themes 5 to 8 are located, a set of vehicles, heavy weapons, photographs of the battlefield, films and documents including maps are displayed. The fifth theme '*Shifting Sands*' highlighted the battle of the British army against the Italians and Germans in the deserts of North Africa. This theme provided a detailed explanation of the battles and the victory of the British. Like the themes above, the concept of strength was the primary focus.

The next theme '*Wasteland*' was concerned with the battle on the Eastern Front and the invasion of the Soviet Union, describing in detail the way Germany was advancing during 1941. The rapid advancement of the Soviet army's industry, which helped push back the German army was emphasised. This was illustrated by displaying four films showing

the German invasion, Winter battles, the Soviet advance and the Capture of Berlin, as well as a range of photographs, and other equipment related to soldiers. The introductory panel pointed to the constant massacres of soldiers and civilians, which resulted in millions of dead. Like the WWI exhibition, the casualties were mentioned in a few panels but in general terms. The stories of the casualties of war did not get the same attention as the battles which took place on the various battlefields' during WWII.

The seventh theme 'Overlord' is similar to the above themes in that it continues to tell the rest of the battlefield stories, focusing on the story of the D-Day landings, ending with the occupation of a devastated and ruined Germany. This theme employed the same modes of display as the other themes in the WWII exhibition, emphasising the concept of the Allies power and strength. As mentioned above, the type of objects on display (battlefield-related objects) might constrain the curator into looking at war from a specific angle. The last theme of the exhibition, titled '*Dust to Ashes*' discussed the Allies battle with the Japanese army focusing on the advancement of the Allies over Japan. It demonstrated the destruction of Japanese cities and factories, ending with the Hiroshima bombing and the eventual surrender of Japan. This theme mentioned how the Japanese army controlled several countries in Asia, with no single indications on the issue of 'comfort women'. This theme did mention other victims who were impacted by the Japanese invasion. For example, a painting portraying the story of some people who suffered from imprisonment depicted thin and malnourished women and children inside an internment camp in Singapore. The label states that they are cleansing 'themselves from the humiliation of imprisonment', and they are afraid that they might not be able to continue their lives normally ever again (Figure 5.28). Another story included an auxiliary nurse who managed to document her experience as a prisoner of the Japanese. The stories of women appeared in this exhibition but were fragmented around a few themes. Nonetheless, the focus was on the military experiences during different battles, which secured greater importance in the exhibition narrative. There is a lot of similarities between the WWI and WWII exhibitions in terms of placing more importance on the battlefield and the technological advancement in weaponry. However, the WWI exhibition allocated more

than one theme showing women contributing during the war, and it was more organised in terms of visitor movement, and the exhibition design.



Figure 5.28: WWII exhibition, by Leslie Cole, depicting malnourished women and children at Sime Road civilian internment camp. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).

5.5 A family in wartime exhibition

This exhibition was located in a separate room on the first floor. It covered WWII's impact on British civilians. This was aptly illustrated through the story of a working-class family from South London, 'the Allpresses'. Their experience of the war resembled that of millions of British people. The first section of this exhibition displayed the family's biography and a model of their house to illustrate a typical household during WWII. Reading the biography of each family member and looking at the house model might make the visitor more engaged and sympathetic with these stories. Indeed, the primary focus of this exhibition was to add a human face to the war, helping the visitor connect with the

experiences of this family. For instance, the story of evacuation was explained through the journey of John Allpress who was 10 years old at the time of WWII. He was evacuated from his home in 1939 as the government was moving 'school children, mothers with young children and other vulnerable groups' away from the scope of German bombing (IWM, 2017: 34). It can be said that the pictures of children on the move and the related items on display successfully illustrated the struggle of young civilians. The next theme showed how housewives adapted to the challenging situation and managed to feed their family, talking about food rationing manufacturing during the war and showing how the change was impacting every family member.

This exhibition also looked at the Women's Voluntary Service through the story of Nellie, Eva and Betty Allpress who worked at a local hospital supporting people from the bombed areas of London (IWM, 2017: 35). This section displayed women's uniforms, pictures and advertising posters urging women to join and support the war effort, pointing out the valuable roles they could play on the home front. This exhibition then discussed the Southern Railway, and that of skilled engine driver William Allpress who was exempted from conscription given his important job in 'carrying out Civil Defence tasks'. This display emphasised the importance of the civilian contribution to the war effort at home. Patriotism was an important concept in this exhibition as it demonstrated the ability of people to endure the hardship of war and to support their nation.

The end of the exhibition centred on the story of the Blitz, following the preparations of the Allpress family against German bomb attacks (from September 1940 to May 1941) (see figure 5.29). It described how the family coped with this situation, and built an air raid shelter in their garden. This story illustrated how the danger of explosions was close to home and forcing the family to leave to a safer place. The introductory panel mentioned the huge number of casualties amongst the civilian population which affected 43,000 people. It also talked about how difficult this period was for millions of citizens who struggled to survive, demonstrating their important role in supporting the war effort and underlining the sacrifice they endured for Britain. This exhibition was important in terms of letting the visitor imagine how British civilians bravely coped with the hardships of war and how they played a crucial role in supporting their country. However, in this

exhibition the visitor could only see the stories of the survivors, as there was no single story on victims of war. The victims in this exhibition, like the other exhibitions above were presented in their totality. The numbers might be shocking, but it is difficult to imagine their horrific experiences and how their family reacted to their loss. Here, it might be worth questioning if the stories of pain and loss contradict the concepts of endurance, bravery and patriotism, as it was clear that activities such as fighting or supporting the war effort were the principal focus throughout this exhibition.

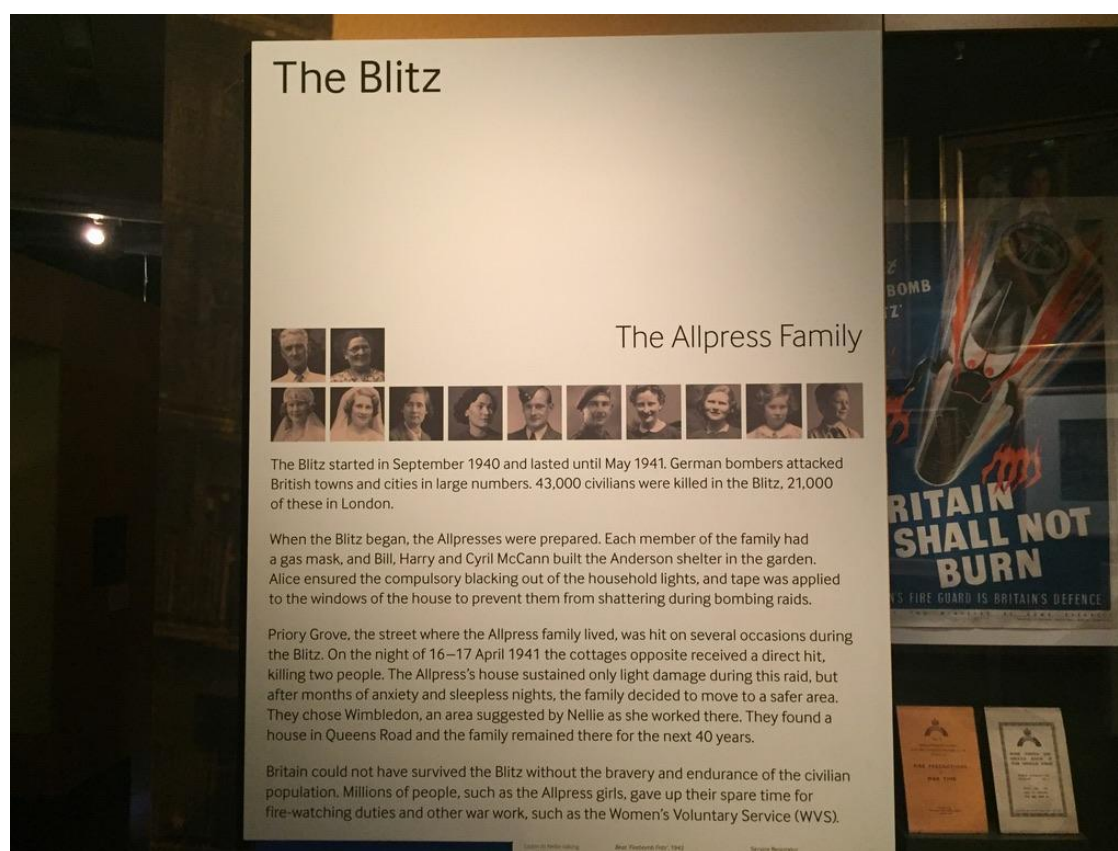


Figure 5.29: A Family in Wartime exhibition. The panel demonstrating the Allpress family and their preparations for German bomb attacks. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017) .

5.6 Peace and security exhibition

This exhibition was located on the second floor in the IWM building. It looked at the formation of the United Nations (UN) following the end of the war in 1945, and contemporary conflicts around the world. Like the WWII exhibition, it was shaped like the

letter 'U', and the visitor had to start from the middle of the building. Also, at the bottom of each introductory panel the visitor could read comments written by the curator, the historian and the designer of this exhibition. This exhibition was meant to cover different events of recent history from different perspectives, employing a range of objects which were used in war or made by artists. The first thing the visitor encountered entering this exhibition was the atomic bomb (see figure 5.30). It was employed as a reminder of the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, which resulted in the death of more than 100,000 civilians. According to the curator, the bomb was deliberately located in the centre of the museum building, working as a representation of political power, technological advancement and fear and horror. The language used in this exhibition was different from the exhibitions which highlighted the two world wars. Instead, this exhibition was more critical regarding the impact of using destructive weapons on civilians, questioning humanity, and its attraction to create this kind of weapon. One of the exhibition historians who commented on the creation of the atomic bomb noted that 'along with Holocaust it showed exactly what humanity is capable of' (Samantha Heywood, panel at the IWM).



Figure 5.30: Peace and Security exhibition, the atomic bomb. Source: Author (Almisnad,2017).

Following the numbered themes, the exhibition continued by describing the situation in Britain after 1945, the return of the soldiers, the new government, the changes in building in terms of housing, the impact of the bombings on cities, and the need to maintain the UK's powerful position in the world. It also talked about the set-up of the National Service, the need for the British Army to maintain control over the colonies, and, the inclination to invest in atomic weapons. This section completed the story of WWII, showing both social and political changes. The sense of pride was present in this part of the exhibition, though there was an emphasis on the advancement of nuclear weapons technology in Britain.

The exhibition presented newsreels which conveyed images from the battlefields abroad showing the conflict progress, demonstrating how television became part of the British home. The next section looked at the tensions between the Catholic Republicans and Protestant Loyalists in Northern Ireland, and the issue of the Falkland Islands. This section displayed some artworks related to the issues for conflict. Some of the artworks

were created by commissioned artists who were employed by IWM to accompany the troops to the Falkland Islands to capture different scenes from the conflict. Others were questioning the excesses and absurdity of the world, challenging the Falkland politics. The museum afforded different viewpoints regarding this conflict through the displays.

One of the artworks glorified British soldiers who served in Iraq and was subsequently presented by the Art Fund to the museum (IWM, 2017: 42). The artist was commissioned by the IWM to create a special artwork about the British forces (see Figure 5.31). The artist gathered postage stamps presenting images of soldiers who had died. He placed the images on slide panels inside an oak cabinet, so the visitor could pull out any panel and see a multiple picture on one of the soldiers. Here, the concepts of sacrifice, heroism and glorification were shown on this display. In order to view the next theme, the visitor had to go back to the starting point and move towards the other side of the exhibition. The sixth theme focused on the Cold War which existed between the USA and the Soviet Union, and the fear of another war that might lead to the use of nuclear weapons, threatening world peace. It described the arms race with the aim of developing stronger weapons since the end of the 1950s, which led to create a strategic warhead and other forms of weapons which could become more accurate in hitting and destroying targeted cities, people and infrastructure.

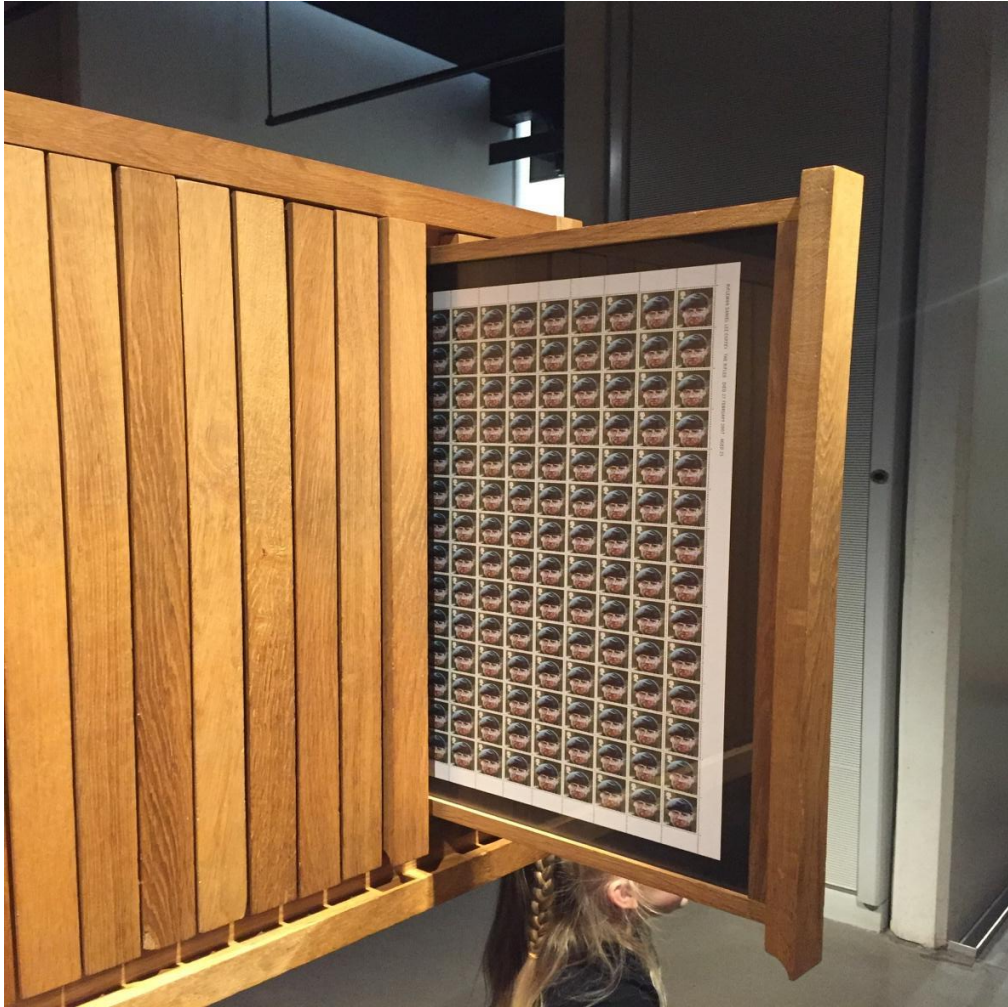


Figure 5.31: Peace and Security exhibition, artwork by Steve McQueen about the British forces serving in Iraq. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).

Within this gallery the theme went on to discuss British made nuclear weapons and Britain's preparations for any future attacks. Alongside the different weapons, this section displayed a sculpture of a disfigured mannequin painted in black, representing the consequences of the nuclear weapon. The artist was concerned about the potential of the nuclear weapon during the 1960s, imagining its devastating impact on the British people and reflect how people felt about this issue during the Cold War. The following theme discussed the formation of the UN, which was deemed essential to maintain peace and security and to resolve conflict situations in the world. Demonstrating the division of

Germany after WWII, which was based on an East-West ideology, marking the era of the cold war. The involvement of the UN in different parts of the world was presented.

The Balkan's war was presented in this exhibition as an example of the UN's involvement to attempt to bring peace to this area. It provides the history of the ancient hatred between different religious and ethnic groups in this region. In 1999, the IWM commissioned an artist to go to Kosovo to discover the roots of this hatred. He provided the museum with an installation titled '*Theatre*' which looked at two groups of people who externally look alike, but in fact are violently divided (Figure 5.32). He added stuffed rooks signifying that the historical hatred is still present. The issue of the devastating impact on the Muslims of Kosovo was marginally covered through a display of pictures from refugee camps taken by an independent artist (Figure 5.33). The suffering of civilians was emphasised in this theme, and the artworks played a crucial role in demonstrating the horrific experience of these vulnerable people. Using art to portray war and the human experience could have a profound impact on the visitor in terms of understanding the impact of war. Though, surprisingly the issue of mass rape against Bosnian women was not mentioned. However, the theme highlighted the role the UN played in intervening to stop the Serbs from killing civilians. The fact that the UN declared in the 1990s that wartime rape against women is a crime against humanity was not introduced in this exhibition.

It is difficult to say that the historical records regarding wartime rape in this period was not available. As argued in the previous chapters many survivor and witnesses of this war are still alive, and this issue has been tackled by the media, as well as scholars from different disciplines, and has been exposed in UN documents. Like the topic of comfort women in the WWII gallery, the museum chose to ignore the issue of sexual violence against women. According to Mason and Sayner (2019: 11), museums usually avoid the representation of difficult or controversial topics in their permanent exhibitions, but they are more flexible in temporary ones. This might explain the absence of this topic in IWM permanent galleries. Mason and Sayner (2019, p. 7) explain that the silence could be attributed to the lack of relevant materials and archive or because of the space limitations. In addition, curators' preferences can be a reason that specific topic is not shown in the museum gallery. Also, the main concept of this theme was the role of the UN in keeping the

peace and security in different parts of the world, so the curators might have preferred to focus on this angle, rather than going into other details. It is noticeable that humanitarian issues have been questioned in the museum, though the topic of war conduct and politics gained much more importance in term of representation.



Figure 5.32: Peace and Security exhibition, the 'Theatre' an artwork by Graham Fagen. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).



Figure 5.33: *Peace and Security* exhibition, photographs of refugee camp taken by Howard Davies. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).

‘*All Changed*’ was the title of the subsequent theme, which covered the era after the 9/11 attack when the USA declared war on terror with the help of its allies including Britain. It was portraying the dangers of unknown and terror attacks, telling how these incidents led to the invasion of both Iraq and Afghanistan. This theme was confusing in parts, because it went further back in history to talk about the Iraq-Iran war in the 1980s, the first Gulf war in the 1990s, while those wars have nothing in common with the topic of the theme which was concerned with the war on terror. This might have been done on purpose to support the claims that the Iraqi regime was threatening world peace, which could justify its invasion, as it was then accused of acquiring weapons of mass destruction. This theme pointed out that the invasion of Iraq was widely rejected by millions of people around the world, including the British people. The exhibition focused on the military operation and the weapons that they used against their opponents. One of the labels criticised the deliberate

killing of Taliban fighters using drones, without trial or warning. The label described it as a controversial issue. The theme also focused on soldiers' suffering and the loss of lives during different attacks. The issue of civilian victims in both countries (Iraq and Afghanistan) was completely ignored. For example, in the case of Iraq, according to the BBC (2013), an academic study suggested that an estimated 500,000 Iraqis died between 2003 and 2011 due to the American invasion. Regarding the issue of wartime rape, two famous incidents were widely covered by the media. The first one was the case of the Abu Ghraib prison where some disturbing pictures of tortured and sexually abused Iraqi detainees were leaked to the media (Howard, 2005, Goldnberg, 2006). One of the pictures showed an American female soldier holding a dog leash around a detainees' neck; she also took a picture next to a human pyramid of naked prisoners giving a thumbs up. Hundreds of pictures featuring dead bodies, fatal injuries, and acts of sexual humiliation, which were very graphic, appeared in the media (Howard, 2005). Many photographs were never released due to their depiction of sadistic physical violence against prisoners. Around the same period in 2004, a video showing British troops beating civilians was released to the media (Howard, 2005). The second incident was the case of Abeer al-Janabi, a 14 year old Iraqi girl who was brutally raped by four American soldiers (MacAskill and Howard, 2007). During the gang rape, one of the soldiers killed her mother, father and younger sister, then went back to rape her, and then the soldiers shot her in the head and burned her body to hide the traces of their crime (MacAskill and Howard, 2007). It can be said that this theme in the exhibition was more about the troops' experience and descriptions of the weapons, giving a broad overview on the war on terror. It might be difficult for the museum to talk about war crimes in this exhibition when the dominant approach was valuing the soldier's sacrifices. However, the Iraq war was highly criticised in the media, and the issues of war crimes were no longer a secret. Therefore, talking about these issues in the museum might be important in terms of presenting a more rounded image of the war.

5.7 The Holocaust exhibition

The Holocaust exhibition is located on the fourth floor and continues down to the third floor. A warning sign at the entrance door suggested that this exhibition is not

recommended for children under the age of 14 years, and a security guard was at the entrance of this exhibition (see figure 5.34). The surrounding space of this exhibition was entirely empty. The Holocaust exhibition opened in 2000 and occupies the largest space in the IWM. It received £12.6m from the Heritage Lottery Fund, which placed a greater responsibility on the museum to reach the expectation of the public (Bardgett, 2012: 21-22). In order to preparing for this exhibition the museum's team faced several challenges. For example, there were not enough material objects to tell the stories of millions of civilians who faced all kinds of atrocities at the hands of the Nazis. The museum team agreed that 'words and phrases could themselves work as artefacts' (Bardgett, 2012, 23). Regarding the ethical challenges, Bardgett (2012: 25) mentions that the team was concerned about exhibiting some objects that might make the Holocaust survivors or their families uncomfortable, such as showing the bone-grinder machine, which was 'used to hide the evidence of the war crimes' (Bardgett, 2012, 25). The team decided to exhibit the machine, because they were certain that censoring historical facts was not a solution - presenting the truth about any topic is what museums should do (Bardgett, 2012, 25). The team was also aware that exhibiting information related to antisemitism might be problematic, as they were worried that some people might find this 'enjoyable'. Nevertheless, they decided to exhibit these materials anyway because it was fulfilling the exhibition's overarching narrative and context (Bardgett, 2012: 25).

This exhibition focusing on Nazi crimes against European Jews between 1933 and 1945, during which two thirds of their population was murdered (IWM, 2017:53). Many other groups were also targeted by the Nazis, for instance, 'Gypsies, Poles, Soviet prisoners of war, homosexuals, the disabled and the mentally ill' (IWM, 2017:53). A range of original objects were displayed to illustrate different historical events of that era, such as photographs, films, documents, and the testimonies of survivors of persecution.



Figure 5.34: The Holocaust exhibition entrance. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).

The upper floor of the exhibition started with an explanation of the rise of the Nazi Party, and the roots of hatred against the Jews in Europe. This was done through a film showing how the Nazis turned the German people against the Jewish population, by taking advantage of the historical hatred and showing the role of propaganda in dehumanising others. The next section looked at the issue of the racial state, showing how Nazi's considered themselves as a superior race. This contributed to the separation of the Jewish population from society. During WWII the Nazis began to exterminate people including those with a disability and/or a mental illness. This section provided a comprehensive understanding of the concept of 'othering', where propaganda can play a crucial role in dehumanising different groups of people, which can contribute to justify violence against them. The concept of dehumanising the of oppositions has been explained by Abler (1992: 4, 5) (see Chapter 2). The importance of emphasising this concept in museums is that it might lead to a better understanding of the reasons behind the unjustified violence. This, in

turn, could help the audience realise what motivated some soldiers to commit war crimes against civilians. Indeed, in the case of Abeer al-Janabi mentioned above, one of the soldiers who committed the rape and murder against her stated in court that he did not consider Iraqi civilians as humans (Barrouquere, 2010, Mail Online, 2010).

The lower floor section of the Holocaust exhibition was much larger. It started with the German invasion of Poland, showing the atrocities committed against the Jewish community, when the Nazis used special marks to distinguish Jews, forcing them into forced labour, and confining them in overcrowded ghettos (IWM, 2017: 55). More than 500,000 Jews died of starvation and illness. After the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1940, the theme outlined the violence that was committed against Soviet prisoners. The Nazis lined up the Soviet prisoners and shot them dead, as was practiced against the European Jews. Some photographs showed images of mass graves of civilians killed who were thrown on top of one another. Hence, watching these images might be upsetting and shocking for visitors. The exhibition then went to cover the topic of concentration camps, where Jewish families were forced into trains heading to Auschwitz, describing how some of them were forced by the Nazis into forced labour. The majority were killed in the gas chambers. This exhibition was powerful in conveying the pain and suffering of Jewish victims during WWII by picturing the soldiers' atrocities against civilians. This exhibition showed that civilians in wartime could be exposed to all manner of atrocities, as the perpetrators would justify their crimes by dehumanising these civilians. It was difficult to see the amount of violence against unarmed people. This exhibition shows the scope and magnitude of the destruction and pain caused by war, not least because civilians constituted the largest number of casualties (see Chapter 2).

Regarding the topic of wartime rape, this exhibition displayed two photographs of Jewish women who were raped. The importance of those images was that they explicitly showed the complex emotion of vulnerable women being naked in public, showing emotions such as fear, horror, panic, pain, and anger. These images represented the real and terrifying side of war and its devastating impact on victims and society. It is a powerful image that puts the audience in a critical moment in that victim's life. That image has the ability to make visitors think consciously and deeply about those women in the photographs

and other women who are facing war atrocities or ongoing conflict. What happened to those two women after that horrible moment? Did they survive or were they murdered or maybe raped again? If they survived, how did they manage to live with this memory and the potential shame? For some visitors, this might be an overwhelming and upsetting experience. For this reason, at the entrance of the Holocaust exhibition, a caution sign indicated an age limit, as well as an employee to assist visitors. My experience of this exhibition was a difficult one. The curator of the photographic history collection, Hilary Roberts, took me there to show me the only picture of raped women in the museum, and allowed me to take pictures for this research. Then, a woman visitor quietly approached me saying that I did not show respect by taking these photographs. I explained to her that these pictures were taken for research purposes. It is clearly a very powerful image, and to see the brutality is indeed a shocking experience for many people. Thinking of the two women in the picture, and how they would feel about being on display in such a vulnerable situation, led me and other visitors to wonder about their display. Unquestionably, no woman would agree to being exposed publicly while facing such a distressing moment. Therefore, I made the decision not to use these pictures for this research.

5.8 Discussion

This section analysed the IWM's permanent exhibitions by discussing the findings in each exhibition in chronological order. To some extent, the IWM showed a sense of the glorification of war not least because the war effort received considerable attention in all the exhibitions. This was done through a continued focus on stories related to the technological advancement in weapons and the role these weapons played in not only winning battles but, ending war, such as the use of the nuclear bombs . Additionally, the museum exhibited a considerable number of weapons from different wars, this included outside the building as well as the permanent galleries covered by this research. The museum highlighted the importance of the political leaders of Britain and its Allies during WWI, WWII, and contemporary wars, focusing on their contributions to the politics of war and tactics. Another concept also dominating these exhibitions was stories on the battlefields. This narrative considered the ways in which soldiers fought and sacrificed for

their nation, demonstrating their struggles, strength, heroism, sacrifice and patriotism. Likewise, the war effort and preparations for war were widely covered, looking at the recruitment of service personnel, munition's factories, employment of women and war volunteers.

Women were shown as supporters in the war effort, taking positions usually occupied by men, who were then at the front. A considerable space in the exhibitions of both World Wars was allocated for their stories, emphasising their patriotism and endurance in war. The question of the victims of war was employed to explain the reasons that lead to different combats and the victims were merely shown as numbers in some introductory panels. The exhibition did not offer many stories about those victims or the survivors. The Holocaust exhibition was the only permanent space that focused on the Jewish persecution and mass killing during WWII, covering all the aspects that led to the genocide, and presenting many stories of victims and survivors. The sexual violence against women in war and conflict was silenced in the IWM permanent exhibitions, despite its historical occurrence in these wars.

The WWI gallery:

Overall, it is patent that the most repetitive concepts in the WWI gallery were soldiers' heroism, sacrifice, suffering and patriotism. The stories about soldiers detailed their lives during the war and beyond, and can be described as impressive, touching and sometimes tragic. The visitor can easily be engaged and moved by them. The other concept that was emphasised in that gallery was the fact that Britain was controlling the seas at the time of WWI, and the importance of its wide colonies, as well as its advanced weapons. This emphasised the notion of pride and superiority over other nations. The visitor can see and feel the pride over these facts throughout the exhibition. Politicians, military leaders and their decisions regarding the war were widely covered in that gallery. Clearly, the emphasis was on power and leadership, placing special importance on men's activities regarding the conduct of war. Women were represented as supporters, patriotic, achievers and in many cases making sacrifices. Their stories fitted within the general context of the themes they appeared in. As such, their roles were usually framed as supporters and helpers; a more

passive role during war. Thus, their stories are usually scattered around different displays or at the end of a particular theme. The women's stories were not as developed as the stories highlighting the men's contribution, which supports Porter's argument (2012, pp. 64, 65). Women's experiences in terms of being victims or survivors of the war are silenced, for reasons which Winter pointed to (see Chapter 3), i.e. war museums act like a memorial site for soldiers. Stories about victims might distract from scenes of bravery and sacrifice, and could, possibly, open discussion about war crimes and the impact war has on civilian populations.

It was evident for visitors that women's roles during war were important to support the nation, but not as important as men who sacrificed their lives to save others and their country. The spaces allocated for women stories were much smaller than for men, and the design was not as elaborate. The suffering of civilians during war was less pertinent than that of the soldiers suffering. For example, the exhibition themes presented information on civilian suffering with limited details, but only as a means to justify why war commenced. Even though, in this war, the number of casualties among civilians exceeded the number of soldiers' casualties (Seifert, 1996, pp. 38, Hynes, 2004, pp. 436). The topic of wartime rape was entirely absent from the WWI exhibition. At the beginning of WWI in 1914, German soldiers committed mass rape against Belgian women when they entered the country in the first month of the war (Brownmiller, 1993, pp. 2 and Hynes, 2004, pp. 437), and yet this is not mentioned on text panels or interpretive labels. It can be said that stories about women as victims and civilians in general have been largely avoided in this gallery, for reasons that might relate to concepts such as patriotism, heroism and sacrifice. These stories might have disturbed the harmony of the exhibition, which is dedicated to the memory of soldiers and war. As mentioned in the description of the WWI gallery, one of the themes contained a document recording incidents of rape, however, it was not highlighted on the introductory panel or labels. Therefore, a curatorial choice was made on what to present in this gallery and what to keep out. It is also important to note that these weapons were donated by the government to the museum for its opening in 1917, to keep it as a record of wars for

subsequent generations (IWM, 2019). Thus, this could be considered as one of the reasons why the museum emphasises the representation of war from this particular angle.

The WWII gallery:

This gallery successfully illustrated all the technical aspects of WWII. Like the WWI gallery, it displayed a wide and diverse range of machinery and weapons, though, it was less engaged with the suffering of soldiers and emphasised the advancement of battle. The concept of strength and power gained a special importance, with a lesser amount of individual stories. Civilian casualties were mentioned several times their totality, similar to the WWI gallery. However, few stories of the impact of war on civilians was presented throughout the exhibition space. This might indicate that the museum placed a greater importance on the politics of war and its tactics rather than the impact on civilians, in particular raped women. This tendency can be seen clearly in the way the museum avoided talking about the issue of 'comfort women'. As the topic of the Japanese army invading many countries in Asia was presented, sexual violence against women from occupied territories was completely silenced. The issue of comfort women is historically recognised (see chapter 3), and many survivors and witnesses are still alive. This kind of silence is more likely to be considered as a matter of curatorial preferences. From a political perspective, this uncomfortable topic may be presented in a permanent exhibition to a lesser extent due to governmental relations with Japan (See the discussion of difficult history in Chapter 3). Also, the exhibition focused on British conflict, which could help us understand why this subject was not fully explored as it did not involve British troops. Additionally, war museums function as memorial sites for soldiers, placing greater importance and significance on their sacrifice, courage and patriotism, which, ultimately, brings victory for their country. As a result, these museums tend to avoid displaying atrocities against civilians (Winter, 2012, pp.152-153). Focusing on topics related to violence against women and civilians might raise questions about the morality and ethics of war and human rights, which might lead to persecuting or shaming some soldiers who committed war crimes. Also, the narrative that deals with war atrocities or the untold stories of others might impose some challenges in terms of visitor expectations at the IWM,

as many of its audience, got used to a traditional or 'familiar' narrative of the war. This kind of narrative is usually reflected through documentaries, media and the stories of family members who witnessed the war (Hawkins, 2020, p. 211). Tackling the suffering of others in the IWM could result in rejection or criticism of this approach, as doing so might reduce the spaces for the familiar history that they learned from the school (Hawkins, 2020, 2020, p. 211).

A Family in Wartime:

This exhibition was concerned with the family experience in war time, showing their struggles during the German bomb attacks. The interpretation and narrative focused on displaying their strength and bravery, similar to the WWI and WWII galleries. So, concepts of unity, courage, sacrifice, heroism, pride as well as patriotism portrays the main message that the museum wants to convey to its audiences through its permanent exhibitions. The victims of the Blitz as mentioned above did not get the same importance as the survivors, as the exhibition only highlighted their large numbers, as argued by Whitmarsh (2001: 7). This might not be due to a lack of relevant material, but could be understood as a deliberate and conscious absence of their stories (Mason & Sayner, 2019, pp. 7). This may, in part be due to the fact relatives of those victims might still be alive. Yet, these relatives are in a position to provide the museum with the relevant resources, if the museum is willing to talk to them. Also, the limits of the space in the galleries might play a role in why the narrative around victims is lesser.

Peace and security:

This exhibition covered a wide range of contemporary conflicts following WWII, starting with the development of nuclear bombs and ending with the war on terror. Technological advancement in armistice was a dominant concept, as it was important to understand the politics of power. Displaying artworks was employed in three ways: to memorialise the soldiers who died in the Iraq war; to show the protests against the Falkland and Iraq wars; and to explain the impact of war on civilians. This shows that the museum welcomed and valued artworks as a means of exploring war from the artists' perspectives, which can

introduce different points of view. As noted by Hilary Roberts, senior curator at the IWM (2017), artists can engage with events such as war in a way that is not always possible using mediums such as a camera or documentary film. The museum have commissioned artists to accompany troops since WWI to document war (see Chapter 6). The topic of wartime rape was one of the features of the Balkan's war, but this fact was not mentioned in the exhibition. However, the theme that covers the Balkan's war mainly described the role the UN plays to try and keep peace in the world. It neglected the fact that this organisation declared in the 1990s that wartime rape is a crime against humanity. This omission could be attributed to curatorial preferences not to represent sensitive issues in the permanent exhibitions. Also, the infamous cases of sexual violence against Iraqi prisoners was not mentioned. However, protests against the Iraq war was included marginally. The silence here could be resulting from the museum's tendency to avoid controversial topics in its permanent exhibitions, as noted by Mason and Sayner (2019: 11). Instead, preferring to discuss these kinds of subjects in their temporary exhibitions only. Also, the war in Iraq brought a great deal of controversy regarding its conduct, thus, focusing on war crimes might distort the soldier's heroic images in the same exhibition space, and might open the debate about the accountability and morality. It might also be due to the curator's preference to meet the visitor expectations following the familiar narrative about the war, as explained by Hawkins above.

The Holocaust exhibition:

The exhibition showed the history of Nazi violence against European Jews during WWII. This exhibition can be considered as a memorial site for the Jewish population who suffered greatly from the atrocities carried out during war. It focused therefore on human tragedy by illustrating a number of moving stories of families and individuals, so visitors can see how the war impacted on civilians. This can show the museum's ability to discuss a difficult topic in its permanent exhibition.

The act of violence against women or other civilians is often committed by soldiers during war. Thus, representing these facts may divert from the image of soldiers who are largely seen as heroes. As mentioned above, war museums tend to function as a memorial

site for soldiers. Consequently, museums may be uncomfortable affording space to talk about war crimes against women. In addition, any emphasis on this topic could put the museum in a compromising position, where veteran's groups or the government could put pressure on the museum to remove certain topics from their exhibitions, such as the examples of the Canadian War Museums, and the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace in Japan (see Chapter 3 and Chapter 7). This sensitive topic might be distressing for some visitors and not suitable for younger viewers, however, alerting visitors, using caution signs such as in the Holocaust exhibition might be effective.

However, IWM curator, Roberts (2017) stresses that the museum must consider the vulnerabilities of some of its audiences before talking about such a difficult subject like wartime rape. The IWM has addressed the impact of war on women in multiple projects, not only in historical conflicts but also in contemporary ones, such as the Nick Danziger photography exhibition in early 2016 (Roberts, 2017). The museum has repeatedly discussed the impact of war on women where they looked at questions such as, are women more vulnerable to trauma? Should women be treated equally when it comes to combat? The IWM is one hundred years old and when it was set up in 1917 it had a committee focusing on women's issues. This committee, which collected and documented, is still proactively collecting and documenting (Roberts, 2017). Considering the representation of wartime rape in the museum, Roberts (2017) points out that the subject of rape in the context of war must include both male and female soldiers. Thus, the rules regarding how rape is defined for women must also apply to men (Roberts, 2017). However, as mentioned in Chapter 2, civilian women and girls constituted the largest number of rape victims, as rape is regarded as weapon of war.

Regarding the difficulties that might face curators if the subject of wartime rape is presented, Roberts (2017) points out that it is important to take into account the context in which the work is being shown. As most exhibitions are free, a museum such as the IWM need to consider the impact on young children and other age groups as well as different nationalities (Roberts, 2017). However, in some exhibition where there is ticketing spaces, the museum can decide to represent such a topic. This is standard practice in the IWM (Roberts, 2017). Furthermore, the museum must consider for example, who is going to

come to this type of exhibition? What level and type of warnings does the museum need to issue? How specific do the exhibitions need to be in their treatment of sensitive topics? What kinds of support do the museum need to provide? (Roberts, 2017). As a result, the IWM have procedures in place which considers these subjects as well as other distressing aspects of war in great detail, and there is a sign off procedure which is rigorous (Roberts, 2017). However, it is recognised that war is distressing and that is not a reason to shy away from the subject (Roberts, 2017).

As an example of the visitors' reaction to a difficult subject such as rape, Roberts (2017) addressed the subject of rape through her exhibition on the photographer Lee Miller '*A Woman's War*'. Lee Miller was abused as a young child. The issue of rape was at the heart of the exhibition and explored how this traumatic experience influenced Miller's vision of women, personally, but also how she photographed them. Many people came to the exhibition because they knew Miller's work and loved it, but the majority of visitors did not know that she had been abused. A considerable number of visitors responded to the fact that Miller was raped as a child. As (Roberts, 2017) states she received comments such as, "that was a shock, I didn't know, I was surprised, now I understand." One comment was received from a victim of child abuse who expressed the distress that she felt exploring this exhibition. Roberts (2017) stresses that the museum may respect different opinions, but this must not stop them from acknowledging this issue. They commented that 'the question of whether to acknowledge it or whether to cover it up, divides opinion amongst society, or at least in this country, but I think in recent years, we've seen a trend towards realising that acknowledging, is the first step in actually making things better' (Roberts, 2017).

Responding to a question regarding censorship issues, Roberts (2017) contends that this is not an issue at the IWM, as the Director General encourages curators to discuss difficult subjects and embrace the full range of subjects that they deal with. Acknowledging the challenges that they face during the process of covering difficult topics, which required thinking of ways that will engage and inform, rather than the contrary (Roberts, 2017). Therefore, every word and every nuance is examined as the curator will write or choose materials to illustrate or make a point, which will be reviewed and challenged. So, it is a subject of peer review. At the end the curator has to defend her/his perspective, or point of

view (Roberts, 2017). This can indicate that exploring topics such as wartime rape in the IWM might involve strict processes and considerations, which might contribute to its absence.

Overall, its representation of war in this museum is subjected to the following hierarchy: first the politics of the war and the political figures with a focus on leadership and patriotism, followed by weapons and the technological advancement to accentuate the notion of power, pride and distinction, followed by the strength of the soldiers, their suffering, sacrifice and patriotism. This is followed by women as supporters of the war effort, focusing on their contributions, sacrifice and patriotism. Throughout the permanent exhibitions, these patterns were continuously repeated and emphasised, giving the impression that the museum in many places was glorifying war whilst silencing many historical facts about sexual violence against women, and atrocities against civilians. These stories were seldom mentioned in these galleries, except for the Holocaust exhibition, which has a different approach as outlined above. Through the example of the IWM and the other examples provided by scholars in Chapter 3, we can theorise the ways in which the subject of rape may be silenced in the museum. However, it is not generalisable for all war museums as this research examined one case study of the IWM. To conclude, the thick description of the IWM permanent exhibitions through the visual analysis method has successfully uncovered the silences over the topic of wartime rape. Therefore, the museum functioned as a memorial site for soldiers, especially in the WWI and WWII galleries. To understand how a controversial topic can be exhibited, the next chapter considers critically temporary exhibitions at the IWM and their modes of representation.

Chapter 6 - Breaking the silence

“The presentation of the glory and suffering of war was for a long time a preferred topic for art”

Boris Groys (2008, p.121)

“Museums provide the evidence for what history have done”

Moazzam Begg (Former Guantanamo Bay detainee, Art, Justice and Terror conference at IWM, 17 June 2017)

All religions, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as well as ancient civilisations, have used visual art in the form of sculpture, symbols and paintings to document their beliefs and history to preserve them for posterity (Balfe, 1987, p.195). Recently, the LGBT community selected the rainbow as a symbol of their movement (Gonzales, 2019); the rainbow reminds people of the community and their struggle. Regarding war, visual images have powerful a impact. For instance, the photo of the Syrian child who was found dead on the seaside invited people's sympathy, which led to the acceptance and reception of refugees in some European countries such as Germany (Smith, The Guardian, 2015). In addition, artists are in a position to spread awareness through their art, and people can trust them, especially when they tackle such an important topic in their artwork, which could have an impact on society. According to Mason and Sayner (2019, p.11), artists are usually commissioned by museums to produce artworks in order to address topics related to hidden history. Considering the psychological suffering of raped women, art might encourage victims to express their feelings, if they have a chance to do so. Consequently, art could act in two ways, as a document and as therapy.

Museums have commissioned artists to accompany troops to convey and to document the war from their perspective, and the IWM has done so since 1917 (Bourke, 2017, p. 9, IWM, 2017, p.49). Since 1920, the IWM has acquired a collection of more than 3,000 of the most significant British war-related artworks (IWM, 2017, p.49). With the

beginning of WWII, the Ministry of Information in Britain constituted the War Artists' Advisory Committee to supervise 'its official war art programme' (IWM, 2017, p.50). More than 400 artists joined this programme. Historically, the official war artists of WWI contributed to the creation of 'visual slogans to aid morale' (Bourke, 2017, p.9). However, these artists were supported by their government, their artworks were censored, and sometimes changed by publishers or used in unexpected ways to promote war (Bourke, 2017, p. 9-10). Currently, the IWM still commissions artists and acquires war-related artworks (IWM, 2017, p 51). These works provide 'provoking perspectives' on contemporary war (IWM, 2017, p .51). Regarding temporary exhibitions, the IWM rarely conducted them in the period between 1925 and 1960 due to space limitations. These exhibitions were then exclusively conducted by the IWM Art Department (IWM exhibition history, 2014), as the museum was predominantly focused on its permanent exhibitions in the years between 1917 and 1924, displaying its collection in multiple sections such as 'Army Section, Naval Section, A section concerning about women, and so on' (IWM exhibition history, 2014). It was not until 1960 that the IWM started a major programme for temporary exhibitions, following the vision of its new Director, Noble Frankland. Since 1982 the Exhibition Department has been responsible for all exhibitions in the museum (IWM exhibition history, 2014).

The first section of this chapter looks at the ways in which the IWM has addressed the subject of war through its temporary exhibitions. While Chapter 5 looked at temporary spaces to uncover silences, this chapter examines another type of museum medium, the temporary exhibition, to examine whether and how silences persist, and where there are possibilities for the museum to engage more directly with difficult topics, such as violence against women in conflict. Through a thick visual analysis method, this chapter covers five temporary exhibitions that were visited between May 2017 and February 2019. The exhibitions during this period focused on different topics related to the impact of the 'war on terror' on civilians' lives. The second section focuses on the IWM's exhibition archive from the 1990s onwards. This timeframe was purposefully selected as the 1990s marks the year when the UN began to consider wartime rape as a crime against humanity. This chapter argues that, unlike the permanent exhibitions that mostly take a patriotic and neutral

approach in representing different wars (see Chapter 5), temporary exhibitions provide a more critical view regarding the issues of war when it comes to the impact on civilians. By surveying a number of different exhibitions, this chapter will also explore the different ways in which artistic methods enabled more a sensitive approach to difficult and distressing topics. In each case, I consider how these interpretive modes might be used to address the topic of wartime rape in the public museum, in terms of employing artworks to discuss this subject instead of using explicit images of violence. Similarly, the Global Summit to end sexual violence against women in war and conflicts exhibited a range of artworks, films, documentaries and so on to discuss the topic of wartime rape in the public sphere. Thus, taking this approach might assist the museums in circumvent any complications related to the representation of this subject.

This chapter therefore argues that the IWM's approach in tackling war issues in its temporary exhibitions are different from those in the permanent exhibitions. Therefore, this chapter will argue that in the temporary exhibitions, the IWM uses artworks to reflect these war issues from a humanitarian perspective, focusing on civilians' experiences of conflict. Through its temporary exhibitions, the museum showed a more in-depth representation of conflict, providing different experiences for its audiences. Mason and Sayner (2019, p.11) suggest that hidden history or difficult topics such as war crimes are usually addressed in small-scale temporary exhibitions which remains common practice in museums today. In doing so, museums usually commission artists to take responsibility for these exhibitions. The artists, as an external party, can function as the museum's 'conscience', enabling the museum to relinquish any responsibilities. This, in turn can release the museum from the need to change its function and duty as a public body (Mason and Sayner, 2019, p.11). Consequently, it can be said that temporary exhibitions function as a tool to break museum silences regarding subjects related to human rights violations, such as those occurring in conflict zones. The question remains, however, to what extent do these temporary practices impact on the museum's permanent exhibitions and wider narratives presented in the museum? These exhibitions representing transient moments when the museum breaks its silence concerning difficult and challenging subjects.

At the same time, another type of silence emerged during this research on temporary exhibitions. It is true that these exhibitions, to some extent, cover the impacts of war on civilians but they overlook or fail to confront the role perpetrators played in causing such terrible suffering. This means that while the museum provides an in-depth representation of those who suffered during war, it does not answer questions such as: who caused this suffering? Were they ever convicted? Why did they target civilians? What was their motivation for such horrific crimes? Did these suffering sanctioned by the military or was it a common and accepted practice of war? Can this be considered a war crime? While acts of violence against civilians were referenced to some extent, it was obvious that the museum avoided getting into details regarding the perpetrators. Moreover, very few exhibitions deal directly with the topic of wartime rape. In this way, a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding violence against women during conflict was eluded in the museum, leading to a continued silencing of this subject. The museum tendency in avoiding to so some extent, the issue of perpetrators, might be because that they do not want to disturb the heroic image of the soldiers, which is well maintained at the permanent exhibitions. The importance of examining temporary exhibitions, even if they are not focusing on the subject of wartime rape, is because these exhibitions can help us understand what the museum feels more comfortable displaying, but, at the same time, helps us determine what subjects continue to be silenced and proscribed.

6.1 IWM temporary exhibitions

The space allocated to temporary exhibitions was located on the third floor of the IWM building. It was a very quiet space compared to the permanent galleries given that there were fewer visitors exploring this gallery area. This might be due to the entrance fees for temporary exhibitions, or the lack of advertisement panel for these exhibitions around the museum building, although the museum had advertised them on its website. The visual analysis of the temporary exhibitions at the IWM took place between May 2017 and February 2019.

On 17 June 2017, the museum hosted a conference titled '*Art, Justice and Terror*' (Figure 6.1). The conference was organised by the London College of Communication

(LCC), at the University of the Arts London. This conference was created in response to a temporary exhibition at the IWM, entitled '*War of Terror*'. This exhibition was a solo show by the photographic artist and LCC senior lecturer, Edmund Clark. The contributors to this conference came from different backgrounds, 'artists, lawyers, eyewitnesses, writers and academics' (IWM conference, 2017). The discussion tackled the ways in which art can raise social awareness regarding issues related to justice, especially in situations when the law has been absent during global conflicts.



Figure 6.1: 'Art, Justice and Terror' conference, IWM London. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).

One of the speakers, Moazzam Begg, is a 'British Muslim author, commentator and civil rights campaigner' who was formerly imprisoned at Bagram and Guantanamo Bay (IWM conference, 2017). He spoke about his experiences of being imprisoned by the US military without charge or trial (IWM conference, 2017). The talk was in the form of a conversation

between Moazzam Begg and Edmund Clark, and both discussed the implications of the war of terror, and its impact on civilians. This conference highlighted the role of art and visual elements such as photographs and films in exposing the injustice, oppression, and suppression that has been experienced by many people, as a result of the war on terror. By discussing a number of stories and artworks related to this issue, the conference provided a critical perspective on the topic of war on terror. The museum demonstrated, through this conference, its willingness and capacity to represent difficult topics, through collaboration with artists and experts in the field. The participants at this conference emphasised the importance of addressing war crimes, and the exploitation of power in conflict, in museums and artworks. Hosting these kinds of conferences in the museum might be seen as another tool that the museum can actively use to start breaking these silences. These types of events which directly stem from temporary exhibitions are an effective way for the museum to address the topic. The museum is not expressing a view publicly but, rather, hosting others who do speak of and witness this difficult topic.

The following exhibitions highlighted what innocent civilians face in the absence of law. It is worth noting that the exhibitions '*War of Terror*', '*Syria story of Conflict*', '*Sergy Ponomarev, A Lens on Syria*' and '*People Power Fighting for Peace*' were on display at the same time during the fieldwork and data collection for this thesis.

1- War of Terror exhibition

The exhibition '*War of Terror*' focused on the measures taken by different countries to confront international terrorism, highlighting the impact of the process of control, such as 'security, secrecy, legality and ethics' (IWM press release, 2017), through artworks by Edmund Clark. The exhibition included a range of photographs, videos and documents exploring the impact of these measures on people's lives. The exhibition concentrated on the British government's participation in the 'Global War on Terror' and looked at the experiences of some of its citizens and residents who were considered as potential suspects, but never convicted in any activities related to terrorism (IWM press release, 2017). Different forms of artworks in this exhibition provided an in-depth representation of the

experiences of those who faced ‘observation, detention and disorientation’ (IWM press release, 2017). The first section explored the issue of ‘*Extraordinary Rendition*’, addressing the topic of secret detention against suspected agents of terrorism, who were secretly handed over to the US and spent time in captivity and unrelenting interrogations (IWM press release, 2017).

The exhibition started with a video installation showing different paragraphs describing different scenes related to the topic of war on terror. For instance, one of the paragraphs talked about two US military soldiers trying to remove a statue of Saddam Hussain (former president of Iraq), which was covered by an American flag, and chained around its neck. This sought to remind the visitor of the iconic image of the 2003 occupation of Iraq when US soldiers destroyed the statue of the then President of Iraq, Saddam Hussain. Reading these paragraphs brings to mind the original images of the most famous photographs related to the propaganda on the war on terror (Benton, 2017). It was a powerful way of showing images that were not actually there. This mode of representation can be adopted by museums to discuss other difficult war-related topics, such as sexual violence against women. Instead of displaying explicit images of violence, museums can indirectly create an immersive experience for their visitors which can aid in avoiding any potential distress.

Then, the exhibition explored the difficult experience of detainees at Guantanamo Bay, by contrasting photographs of the spaces of captivity and the homes of the former British detainees who were released without charge (IWM press release, 2017). This mode of representation addressed the torture and the injustice that many innocent people faced, which can be considered as war crimes. In this display, there was no reference to the perpetrators. Were they ordered to do so? Who ordered them? Have they been held accountable for these actions? These issues were to some extent silenced in this exhibition. The artist succeeded in telling the stories of those people without photographing them in person (Benton, 2017). Other artworks showed the reproduction of censored letters sent to a British detainee in Guantanamo, addressing the issues of military censorship, and the tight control over the prisoners, focusing on the notions of complicity and disorientation (IWM press release, 2017). The IWM has acquired several artworks by Edmund Clark related to

the topic of Guantanamo Bay (IWM press release, 2017), but these artworks were not displayed in the museum's permanent exhibition covering the topic of peace and security, which also looked at the issue of the war on terror. The permanent exhibition's approach to this topic was quite different, as it was delivering a neutral point of view, focusing more on politics and the advancement of weapons technology, and less on the difficult human experiences (refer to Chapter 5). In this way, this temporary exhibition explored what had been silenced in the permanent exhibition.

2- Syria Story of Conflict

This was a small-scale exhibition giving a brief outline about the civil war in Syria, and the intervention of the multinational militant group 'ISIS'. The entrance panel stated that this exhibition looked neutrally at this conflict, trying to provide a balanced viewpoint, as each side of this conflict wished to present their version of the story. A few objects were displayed in this exhibition, for instance newspapers talking about ISIS in different languages, a lifejacket, a bomb, and one dish and two mugs with a picture of the Syrian and Russian president's faces. The exhibition also displayed several images of Syrian citizens telling their stories. For example, it addressed the story of a Syrian woman and her family who had to flee their village when war started. Her daughter delivered a baby on the road, and her other seven-month grandchild was shot in the leg. Later, they stayed with a family member in another city, but since then, she has struggled to get her medication (see Figure 6.2).

This exhibition presented a clear view of the civilians' suffering, highlighting their struggle to stay alive. The modes of representation were similar to those of the permanent exhibitions in terms of their attempts at neutrality. It started with an historical background to the conflict, ending with civilians' stories, and the current political status in Syria at the time of the exhibition. The subject of wartime rape was not discussed in this exhibition, although sexual violence against women, girls and men was widely practiced by the Syrian governmental soldiers and its allied militants as punishment against opposing communities (Nebehay, 2018). The sexual violence against civilians in Syria was considered as a crime against humanity by the UN (Nebehay, 2018). Torture and rape were not only practiced by

the governmental soldiers, but also by other fighting groups such as ‘ISIS’ and other rebel groups. Many girls were forced into marriage, others have been tortured and stoned to death. The sexual violence was continuously perpetuated for eight years (Nebehay, 2018) and detailed in the media based on interviews with survivors, eyewitnesses, medical staff and defectors (Nebehay, 2018). The youngest registered victim of rape was a nine year old girl (Nebehay, 2018). The temporary exhibitions at IWM were created to present provoking views of war and yet, wartime rape was not a subject represented as completely as it could have been in this exhibition. Despite the fact that this subject was repeatedly covered by international and national media, the museum was still hesitant to discuss this topic, and this might be because it considered it too sensitive and controversial, since no one has been convicted, and the war is still ongoing (Nebehay, 2018).



Figure 6.2: Syria Story of Conflict exhibition, a display showing stories of Syrian citizens during the civil war. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).

3- Sergy Ponomarev, A Lens on Syria

This was a photographic exhibition by the Russian photojournalist Sergy Ponomarev. He was amongst the few people who were given access to areas controlled by the Syrian Government (IWM history, 2018). His work featured the suffering and experiences of the Syrian people during war, and their struggle to flee the country in order to seek asylum in Europe (IWM history, 2018). The exhibition started with photographs from the Government controlled areas showing the daily life of people (Figure 6.3). However, while the images depicted what can be considered as a peaceful situation in Damascus, they can also be seen as reflecting uncertainty of the war situation and the resulting economic crisis (exhibition panel).



Figure 6.346: *A Lens on Syria* temporary exhibition, showing daily life of the Syrian people in Governmental-controlled areas. Source: Author (Almishad, 2017).

The exhibition also covered the history of the conflict and the reasons that led to it, exploring the large number of casualties, which reached more than 500,000 people. Each panel in this exhibition had two paragraphs, one of them presenting the artist's perspective, telling his impression of the war and showing the scale of destruction with an accompanying photograph, while the other paragraph was written by the museum and commented on historical events related to the same photograph. This can be considered as a creative way to of embracing a human dimension to the story, where the visitor can engage with the tragedy of others and imagine the horrors that they faced during war through the artist's perspective. Consequently, this might lead to more condemnations of war and the violence committed against civilians. One photograph was both powerful and evocative in showing the horrors of war without any actual image of violence or bombing (Figure 6.4). It depicted the city centre of Homs, which was turned into a ghost city after massive bombing and siege.



Figure 6.4: Lens on Syria temporary exhibition. A shopping mall in ruins in the city of Homs. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2017).

The ruins in the photograph are of a shopping mall, and the poster on the building was used for an election campaign for the Syrian President, Bashar Al-Assad, after government forces gained control over the city. The translation of what is written on the poster reads: 'Together, we will build it'. This image cleverly depicted the violence against the people and the horror of war without actually showing it. It was the absence of people that made this picture powerful. Also, what adds more potency to this photograph is the contrast between the promise of the reconstruction of the country on the poster and the image of the destruction in the background. This mode of representation can show the role artwork can play in conveying the image of violence against civilians without showing dead bodies or explosions. This approach can also be applied to the topic of wartime rape, to avoid the sensitivity or distress that might occur through its representation.

The exhibition then went on to cover the issue of the refugee crisis, which sees refugees fleeing to Europe across the sea, in the hope of a better life. This part of the exhibition conveyed the stories of struggle, pain and uncertainty. Through an installation, the artist showed a range of photographs of refugees from Syria and elsewhere, depicting different emotions such as continuous disillusionment and hope fading. These photographs show the many difficult experiences these people endured; they were exposed to violence and border closures as well as harsh weather and deprivation (see Figures 6.5-6.7). The photographs in this exhibition illustrated how the war can dramatically change people's lives, from a peaceful situation one minute to complete destruction the next. It is worth noting that while rape was widely practiced against women and girls in refugee camps (see Chapter 2), it was not addressed in this exhibition whatsoever.

Exploring war through people's experiences and their stories, rather than focusing on military and weapons technology, can have a profound impact on the viewer, in terms of understanding how war can destroy the life of entire populations. Taking this kind of approach to war might pose ethical challenges regarding its purpose, the use of advanced weapons against populated cities and other political issues related to civilian protection.

However, the viewer might easily see the difference between the permanent and temporary exhibitions approach in tackling the issues of casualties. Few references in this exhibition indicated the atrocities of the governmental army and its allies. For instance, the exhibition did not tell who were the Syrian government's allies? What is their role in the conflict? Did they commit war crimes? And how? How many countries bombed Syrian cities? Was it only the Syrian government and its allies or were there other governments? Who funded the opposing militant groups? Who sold them the weapons? How was ISIS formed? How many nationalities were involved with ISIS? and how did they allow access to Syria? Again, the perpetrators were to some extent absent in this exhibition.

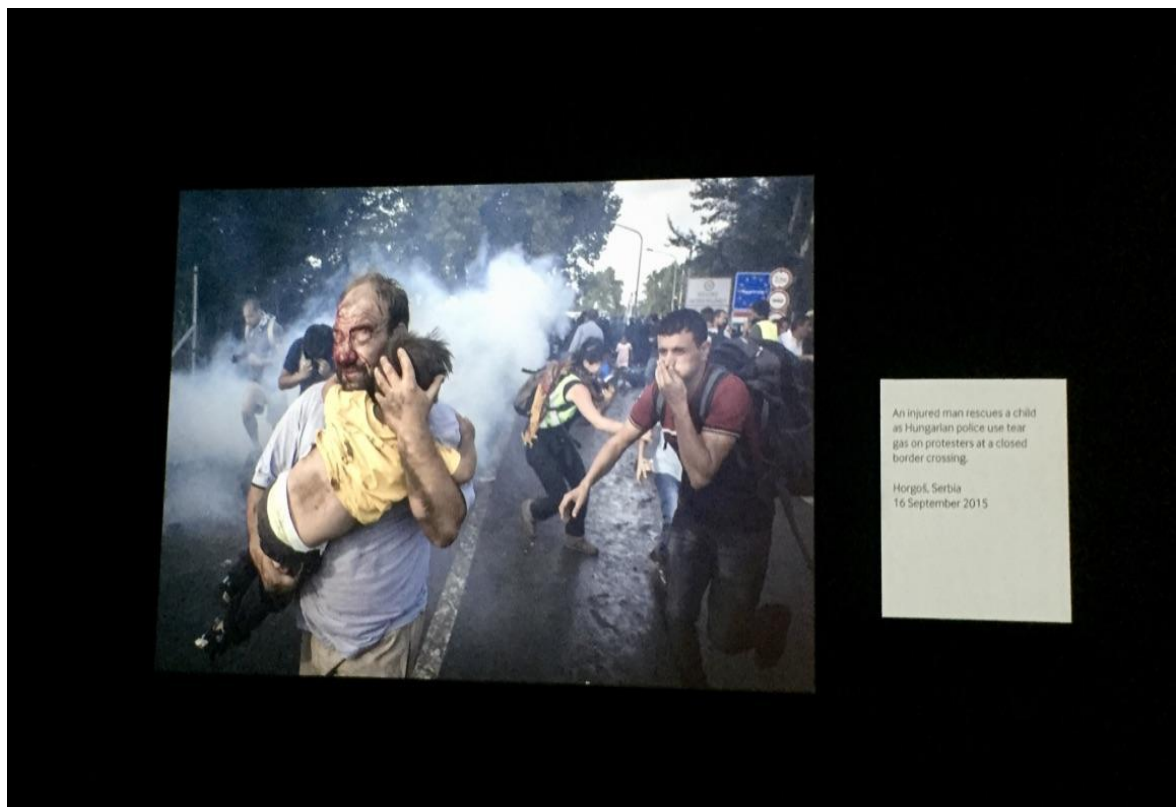


Figure 6.5: Lens on Syria temporary exhibition. Refugee crisis in Europe. Author (Almisnad, 2017).



Figure 6.6: *Lens on Syria* temporary exhibition. Refugee crisis in Europe. exhibition Author (Almisnad, 2017).

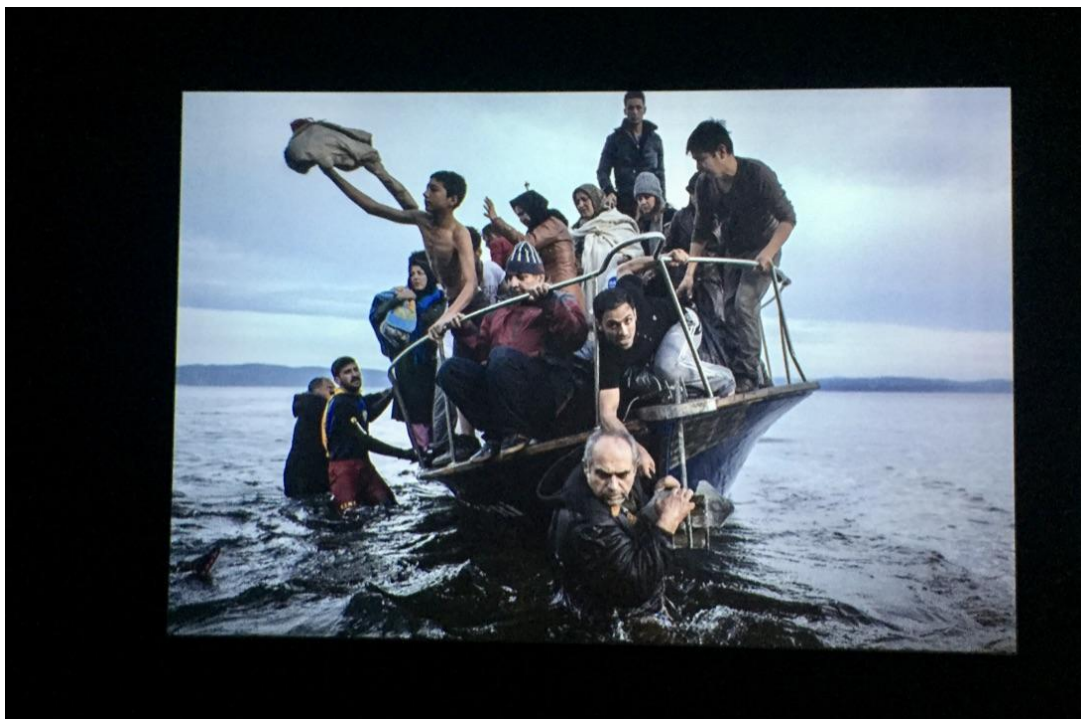


Figure 6.7: *Lens on Syria temporary exhibition. Refugee crisis in Europe. Author (Almisnad, 2017).*

4- People Power Fighting for Peace

This exhibition looked at anti-war movements in the British context starting with WWI from 1914-1918 until the 2003 march against the war in Iraq. It covered the anti-war protesters including pacifists who opposed all wars, and those who disagreed with them, exploring how individuals and organised groups objected to war, and the threat of nuclear weapons. This exhibition highlighted the demonstrations, marches, camps and sit-ins that were organised by protesters who were in some instances imprisoned for their actions (exhibition panel). This exhibition employed a range of interpretive elements such as posters, art, films, music, and recordings of the protester's voices.

The exhibition presented these movements in a chronological order, starting with WWI. The first theme of this exhibition was titled '*Blessed are the peacemakers*' (figure 6.8) and discussed the objection to conscription during WWI in 1916, as the British government had obliged men aged between the age of 18 to 40 to fight. Some men, for religious, moral or political reasons, refused to serve in the army. These men faced hostility from a patriotic nation and some of them were sentenced to life in prison. Others accepted to do different forms of work. Then, the exhibition introduced the pacifist movement, who offered humanitarian services to the troops on the front line, as well as to civilians. Looking at the artworks, the exhibition discussed how artists and writers reacted to WWI, reflecting on the suffering of civilians and their communities. According to Alison Wilcox (2017), focusing on anti-war initiatives at the time of WWI was important to balance the huge volume of military events during this period, which has occupied the media and the public attention throughout the centenary. The exhibition was temporary and had limited access due its entrance fees and therefore if this approach had been incorporated within the WWI permanent exhibition, it would have offered a more comprehensive view of the war.

The next theme was titled '*Never again*' and was concerned with the expansion of anti-war groups since the 1930s which included a large number of people and celebrities. It also discussed the rise of fascism in Europe, and how the pacifists had agreed that the only way to face Nazi Germany was by using force. During WWII, those who objected to war

were involved in alternative jobs that fitted with their beliefs (exhibition panel). Then the exhibition focused on anti-nuclear movements in Britain during the Cold War, with the theme '*Ban the bomb*' (Figure, 6.9). This section explored growing condemnation of the use of nuclear weapons, and the establishment of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) in the 1950s. The protests against the Vietnam war was also presented in this exhibition, as the CND movement in Britain shifted its focus from nuclear weapons to this issue. The next section was concerned with the 2003 march against war in Iraq, showing films and banners that were displayed in Trafalgar Square (Figure, 6.10), demonstrating people's rejection of war and their involvement in the march through a film. This march was organised by the Stop the War Coalition. This exhibition effectively highlighted the anti-war movements from the 20th century onwards and the role individuals and organised groups played in trying to stop war and militarisation. This exhibition presented a crucial part of the history of war, and yet these stories were negligibly present in the permanent exhibitions. This demonstrates that events related to military, politics and weaponry are dominant in the permanent exhibitions. Once again, we see that the focus in the permanent exhibitions were on commemorating the sacrifice of soldiers who went to war. Therefore, stories on rape, civilian atrocities and devastation are silenced. Wilcox (2017) proposes that incorporating the stories of anti-war activism in the relevant permanent exhibitions could add a counterbalance to other spaces in the museum that only focus on the military aspect and the battlefield.



Figure 6.8: 'People power fighting for peace' temporary exhibition. The anti-war movements during the WWI. Author (Almisnad, 2017).

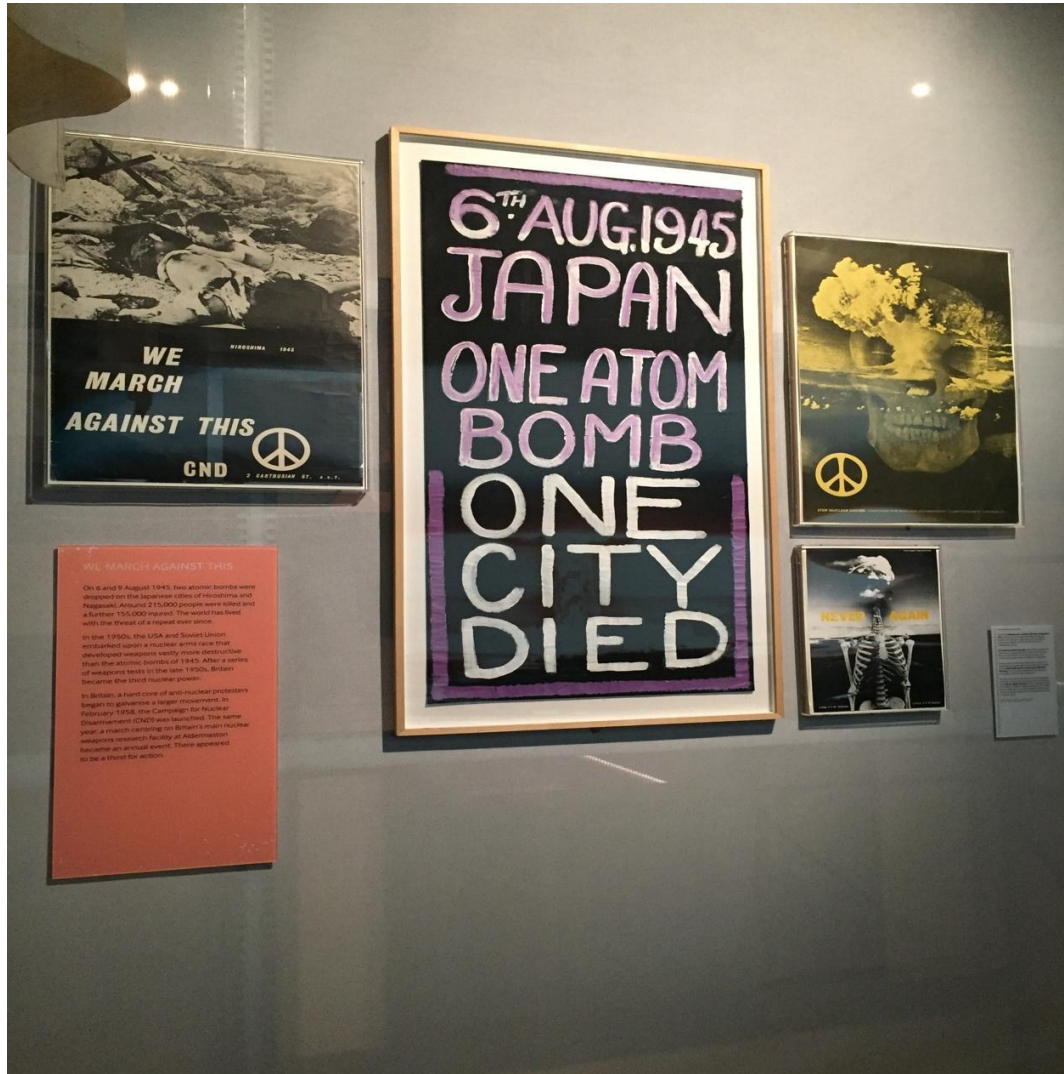


Figure 6.9: 'People power fighting for peace' temporary exhibition. 'Ban the bomb' exhibition theme. Author (Almisnad, 2017).



Figure 6.10: 'People power fighting for peace' temporary exhibition. Banners of Stop the War Coalition. Author (Almisnad, 2017).

5- Age of Terror

This was a major exhibition at the IWM, which presented artworks from 40 British and international artists (IWM press release, 2018). It was the largest art exhibition organised by the museum at the time of its centenary year (IWM press release, 2018). It featured fifty provocative contemporary artworks in response to conflict since 9/11 (Takengny, 2017, IWM press release, 2018, Veeren, 2018, p. 1), and included paintings, film, photographs, sculptures and installations (Takengny, 2017, IWM press release 2018; Veeren, 2018, p.1). The exhibition was divided into four themes: '9/11, State Control, Weapons, and Home' (Veeran, 2018, p.1, IWM press release, 2018). These topics attracted many artists, due to the changing nature of modern conflict, which now impacts everyone's lives, due to the ever-present states of emergency (IWM press release, 2018). In its press release, the IWM

(2018) acknowledged the importance of introducing artist's perspectives on conflicts, in that they have the ability to provide a critical viewpoint in the form of artworks, adding different layers of understanding, which is not usually offered by mainstream media.

The first theme showed the artists' immediate responses to the deadly attacks on 9/11. For example, in response one of the artists displayed a range of front pages from newspapers from around the world to show the impact the media plays in shaping people's reaction to this issue (Takengny, 2017). Another artist responded differently to the media-stream, as he decided to film the streets around the World Trade Centre immediately after the attacks (Takengny, 2017). Two artworks were employed as a memorial for those who lost their lives in the attacks, using the concept of absence (the absence of the buildings and of the people) (Veeran, 2018, p.2). The next section showed how artists reacted to human rights violations due to state control and surveillance (Takengny, 2017, IWM press release, 2018). In this section, one of the artists presented a film exploring the psychological and physical torture against detainees in the US prison camps, such as Guantanamo (Takengny, 2017). However, while the exhibition provided a critical viewpoint on the topic of torture in Abu Ghraib prison and Guantanamo, it did not show any explicit reference to the military role in carrying out these atrocities (Veeran, 2018, p.3). This absence is compatible with the 'cultural and political expedience', which disconnects the soldiers or military from 'unpopular wars', in order to 'deny the pleasures of war and how these reproduce violence' (Veeran, 2018, p.4).

Other artworks were concerned with the psychological, physical and cultural impact of modern weapons used in contemporary warfare, focusing especially on drones (Veeran, 2018, p.4). The topic of drones was also covered in the permanent exhibition regarding the war against Afghanistan, which brought up the ethical questions surrounding the use of these types of weapons which are used to kill individuals without warning (an issue of concern in countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan). The last part of the exhibition entitled '*Home*' explored the devastating impact of war on the landscape and people through several artworks. One of them was a film looking at the history of war in Afghanistan since the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1979 until the US-led coalitions through filming the ruins of the former presidential palace. This focused on the physical

and psychological suffering of the Afghan people, and the destruction of their landscape (Takengny, 2017). Veeren (2018, p.5) suggests that instead of representing the horrors of war in a separate section entitled '*Home*', it would have been better to have situated this within the 'weapons' section, or at least draw a connection to it. Indeed, this would have been a more adequate way of addressing the impact of modern weaponry on people and the landscape by connecting advanced weapons with images of destruction. The subject of the impact of war on the Afghan people was lightly dealt with in the permanent exhibition, which instead focussed more on the stories related to the development and advancement of weapons and the politics that led to the occupation.

This exhibition was provocative, powerful and engaging, because it offered a completely different perspective on the topic of war and terror. The visitor could engage with the artworks and relate to them on a humanitarian level. It showed how war can change people's lives for the worst. However, this exhibition highlighted issues related to the difficult impact of war through its exploration of the direct and indirect images of destruction and suffering. Yet, the cause of this destruction and suffering was silenced. Whilst this exhibition highlighted the role weapons played in the devastation and destruction, it failed to confront the unethical conduct of soldiers who targeted civilians. Thus, visitors could see the impact of war but not fully understand the causes. Like the '*War of Terror*' exhibition, which is discussed above, it did not answer questions of accountability, the perpetrators involved and the necessary concept of war crimes. According to Veeren (2018, p.2) sometimes it is the necessity that forces curators to focus on some things and leave others. Veeren (2018, p.2) has described the difficulties that museum curators may face in organising such an exhibition. For example, addressing politically controversial wars such as the Iraq war and the war in Afghanistan, in which more than 50% of UK citizens disagreed, might require a deeper level of engagement to explore a range of different feelings and emotions regarding this topic (Veeran, 2018, p.2). The demonstrations against the invasion of Iraq in 2003 were the largest in history (Veeran, 2018, p.2). The public's view of this war was overwhelmingly negative, but the museum has to weigh up the factors involved in organising an exhibition which examines a contemporary event such as war which is still in recent history and collective memory.

The research has now examined and analysed the temporary exhibitions at IWM between 2017 and 2018. The next section investigates the archive of past exhibition's at the IWM in order to determine if there are museum silences on this research topic. I decided to investigate the representations of wartime rape establishing from the 1990s. This period was significant because the UN considered sexual violence against women a crime against humanity. Thus, an exploration of the archives can help us understand to what extent the museum responded to this issue (if at all).

6.2 IWM exhibition archive since the 1990s

Contact with museum staff was made regarding their archives on this subject. A museum document containing a table of past exhibitions from 1918 to 2014 was provided for my research project. It is important to note that the archive at that time was not wholly documented. Yet, the number of total exhibitions was 496 and half of them (248) were organised by the museum's Art Department. At the time of the fieldwork, I was notified by the IWM archivist that the archive was still not fully completed, which resulted in me choosing a limited number from the exhibition list (no more than three documents, but I was allowed to access five of them). Since this research studied museum silence on the subject of wartime rape, I decided to focus on exhibitions from the 1990s onwards. During this period the world witnessed two genocidal wars (the Bosnian war and the Rwandan war) and the UN had considered sexual violence against women a crime against humanity (see Chapter 2). Therefore, I wanted to see how the IWM responded to these events. From all their archival documentation, which contained more than 400 exhibitions, only four tackled this topic. Two of these exhibitions addressed some controversy in the museum and in the media. The first one was an art exhibition by the British artist Peter Howson, entitled '*Bosnia: Paintings by Peter Howson*', and opened on 13 November 1994. The other exhibition was a photographic exhibition by Simon Norfolk, entitled '*For Most of It I have no Words: Genocide, landscape, memory*' which opened at the IWM on 8 September 2000 (IWM exhibition history, 2014). I attempted to contact the curator and the artist to

understand the challenges they faced in doing the Bosnia exhibition however no response was forthcoming.

1- Bosnia: Paintings by Peter Howson

Peter Howson was commissioned by the IWM to accompany the British troops in Bosnia (1992-1995) and was nominated as an official war artist to document the UN peacekeeping forces in his artwork (IWM collection, 2019). The exhibition was shown in two venues, the IWM and the Flower East (IWM exhibition archive, 2018). On his website, Peter Howson posted a statement by the IWM from 1994 that praised his contribution in documenting the atrocities of the Bosnian war, by showing a range of paintings, some of which depicted terrifying images of rape against women and violence against civilians (Peter Howson website). The statement acknowledged that these paintings are considered historical records of the Bosnian war. In a filmed interview on his website, Peter Howson stated that the artworks' impact in depicting war are different from photographs and films, because they represent an imagination which cannot be produced by other media, as the artist can capture something that the camera can not (Howson, 1994). However, the museum did install a warning sign at the entrance of the exhibition stating that it contained images of violence which might be disturbing for some. Most of the visitors were school children, who were not shocked by the images, but instead were, according to the artist, interested in talking about it (Howson, 1994). To coincide with this exhibition, the museum organised a conference for schools on the subject of war artists (IWM exhibition archive, 2018). The artist has described his experience of documenting the conflict as difficult and depressing, and it took him more than six months after returning to the UK to start painting (Howson, 1994). It was the pain and the suffering of others that motivated him to do these paintings (Howson, 1994). So, the topics of these paintings were the artist's choice.

The IWM website exhibited one painting entitled 'cleansed' from its permanent collection which depicts Muslim refugees who were forced to leave their homes by the Croats (IWM collection, 2019). The story of their struggle continued, as they were sheltered by a Muslim doctor, who was later shot dead, which urged them to seek help from

a UN camp which refused them entry, so they were waiting desperately on the roadside when the artist depicted them (IWM collection, 2019). The website talked generally about war crimes, genocide, and violence, mentioning ‘murder of certain groups’ as part of ethnic cleansing (IWM collection, 2019), but with no indication of who these groups were, and who the perpetrators were. Indeed, the wartime rape of Bosnian women was not mentioned either.

The exhibition archive shows that there was some controversy regarding a painting entitled ‘Croatian and Muslim’ which depicted two Croatian men violently raping a Bosnian woman, while ‘pushing her face into a toilet’ (MacFarlane, 2017). The artist made this painting in response to the increasing number of rape victims which exceeded 20,000 women. He also interviewed more than one hundred rape victims (Sotheby’s, 2016, MacFarlane, 2017). Sexual violence against women was a distinguishing feature of this war. So, the woman in this painting represented all the victims of wartime rape, where this act of violence was specifically focused on Bosnian Muslim women (MacFarlane, 2017). According to MacFarlane (2017) this painting represents the situation when civilians meet with the atrocities of war. This painting was meant to reflect the horrors of war. It was not intended to depict the conventional scene from a battlefield where men fight each other, but instead showed two men against one woman in her own home, which added a shock factor to this image (MacFarlane, 2017). MacFarlane (2017) described this painting as ‘emotionally challenging’, because it works as a reminder of what war can bring to innocent civilians, which is rape and death.

The IWM rejected this painting as part of their permanent collection (Sotheby’s, 2016, MacFarlane, 2017), claiming that the artist did not witness the actual rape itself, ignoring the fact that this war was a war of genocide and rape (MacFarlane, 2017). Interviewing a large number of rape victims was not deemed valid evidence for the museum (Sotheby’s, 2016). The rejection caused considerable differences in opinion. On the one side the museum and those who are agreeing with it, had undeclared reasons for its rejection, not least because the painting depicted a graphic image of rape, which can evoke some political tensions, and, on another side those who saw that the museum had responsibility to acquire this work for their permanent collection (Sotheby’s, 2016). The

public debate came to an end when the British singer David Bowie bought this painting, as people were concerned that the painting might be purchased by a foreigner (Sotheby's, 2016).

The controversy over the painting appeared in the IWM exhibition archives, as the exhibition file contained more than 25 articles from different newspapers and magazines covering the issue of the Howson painting. For example, *The Times* magazine issue of 10 July 1993 (no reference online) mentioned that the artist was expected to paint the heroic actions of the UN troops, but instead depicted violent and disturbing images of war. The exhibition file also contained five letters discussing the issue of the painting, from the museum director to the press editors explaining why the museum did not purchase the 'Croatian and Muslim' painting. For example, one of the letters was sent to the editor of the Today programme at BBC Radio 4, as the director was complaining about a report claiming that the museum did not buy the painting of rape because it was too violent. The museum replied that this claim was not true, because the museum was exhibiting this painting in its temporary exhibition. However, the artist was commissioned by the museum to convey images of war, and the museum was entitled to acquire only one artwork for its permanent collection. So, regardless of how powerful the painting of rape was, the artist did not actually witness any rape incident, instead, the museum chose another powerful painting based on scenes that the artist had witnessed. The letter ended by saying 'I think we deserve credit for sending a war artist to Bosnia and for holding a major exhibition of this (often disturbing) work' (IWM exhibition archive, 2018).

It was obvious from the archive that the media's exchanges with this exhibition did cause discomfort for the museum, although the museum claimed that its choice regarding the purchased painting was based on the credibility in conveying images of the war. Their argument regarding the necessity that the artist should witness the actual rape to consider his painting for the permanent collection was not convincing, as it is impossible for a war artist accompanying UN troops to witness such an event (we can argue that to see the actual rape the artist should be in the same room as the perpetrators). Also, to say that the testimonies of more than one hundred rape victims, interviewed by the artist, cannot be considered as evidence was not persuasive. However, the museum did exhibit all the

paintings in its temporary exhibition and was keen to keep the silence in its permanent collection. They chose to collect a painting from this exhibition entitled 'Cleansed' which was depicting a group of people waiting on the roadside. This painting was purchased to represent the Bosnian war but the exhibition label did not explain the story for the visitor.. The museum may reasonably avoid representation of graphic images in its permanent collection due to political sensitivity or other concerns (Sotheby's, 2016). However, it is allowing artists' critical perspectives about war in its temporary exhibition. Thus, the museum is disposed to allow images of violence in its temporary exhibitions but not in its permanent art collections. Therefore, it can be understood that the museums art collections are silencing the topic of wartime rape and violence against civilians.

2- For Most of It I have no Words: Genocide, landscape, memory

This was a photographic exhibition by Simon Norfolk, which took place in 2000. The photographs in this exhibition covered a range of different wars and genocides (Rwanda, Cambodia, Vietnam, Auschwitz, Dresden, Ukraine, Armenia, Nuremberg, and the former Yugoslavia). The photographic work of Simon Norfolk explores genocidal wars in the 20th century. He approaches the topic of war and genocide by examining the notions of absence and forgetting, as he usually shows landscapes where the violence took place, with no people in his images (Leeming, 2010, Open Eye Gallery, 2012). The IWM exhibition archive (2018) showed that there was a hostile situation between the artist and the museum during the process of organising this exhibition. In one of the emails, the artist complained that the museum had altered a text panel which presented his reflection on genocide, instead they had changed the meaning of his work (email print from the exhibition archive, 2018). He commented that he had exhibited the same artworks in different venues abroad and had never received any complaints before in expressing his opinion.

In his letter to the museum staff, he requested they restore his original text, suggesting that the museum could write a disclaimer on the wall of the exhibition, or that they should produce counter texts to explain their own opinions which would turn the exhibition into an open debate (IWM exhibition archive, 2018). This controversy was concerning the subject of Dresden and the Vietnam war, where the museum staff saw that the artist had written a very emotional interpretation of these events, which was described as ‘tendentious’ (biased or prejudiced) (IWM exhibition archive, 2018). The issue was that the artist was considering the Dresden bombing and the mass killing of 4 million civilians in Vietnam as a genocide, while the museum staff was regarding both events as a clear military operation. The staff’s concerns were not only about the text, but also, they thought that including these topics in this exhibition would automatically imply that these events were an act of genocide, which is something that the museum would not wish to do (IWM exhibition archive, 2018). At the end, the museum co-edited the text panel with the artist and put a disclaimer in the exhibition to settle this controversy.

In this exhibition, the artist had focused on the brutality of the perpetrators which was not shown in other temporary exhibitions covered by this research, except for the case of Peter Howson. Both exhibitions caused controversy regarding issues related to the perpetrators. In the case of Howson, the museum claims were about the lack of evidence, whereas in this case it was not an issue of evidence, but rather it was a matter of definition, as in which category the mass killing fitted in, and whether it was caused by the politics of genocide or by a military operation. In the case of genocide, it can be regarded as the worst crime against humanity according to the UN (BBC, 2016), while military operations are not. Here is a part of the Dresden text panel from the IWM exhibition archive:

The Royal Air Force annihilated the city of Dresden and its inhabitants on the night of 13/14 February 1945. Whilst this was not 'genocide' in the true sense of the word, it is included here to show how easily the ability to kill can outstrip any justification for killing. Dresden had not been bombed earlier (...) nothing there worth bombing. (...) it become a target simply because bombers and pilots were available.

The Vietnam text panel read:

While much has been said about the 58,000 American servicemen killed in Vietnam, little mention is made of the 4 million Vietnamese who lost their lives in that conflict. As the case with the RAF over Dresden, much of the conduct of the war falls outside the definition of genocide - but both are in a grey area close to genocide. What in these cases was that the technical capacity and enthusiasm for waging war ran far ahead, and out of control, of the capacity for choosing targets.

Looking at these text panels, one can ask: why did the museum not indicate that deliberate mass killing is a war crime, just like genocide? By saying that the mass killing was due to 'technical capacity and enthusiasm for waging war' it might be understood as a justification for what normally can be considered as a war crime. This case is a reminder of the case of the Canadian War Museum's which was discussed in Chapter 3, where the issue of Dresden

bombing also caused a controversy. It seems that criticising Allied war crimes is not a topic that museums want to discuss, even in a temporary exhibition. Therefore, the censorship over the artist's point of view regarding the issue of Dresden can be understood as a means of avoiding controversy with veteran's groups or society and the media, rather than adjusting the definition of genocide.

3- Crimes against humanity: An exploration of genocide and ethnic violence

This was a small-scale exhibition exploring the theme of genocide and ethnic conflict, which was held at the IWM in 2002, looking at different conflict zones where they shared some common features of atrocities and brutalities. For instance, Armenia, Nazi-occupied Europe, Cambodia, East Timor, Bosnia, Rwanda and other places (IWM exhibition archive, 2018). The central element of this exhibition was a commissioned 30-minute film which was running continuously during the day. The film was narrated by well-known commentators which explored five themes. It was in the form of interviews with various people talking about trials of war crimes, including sexual violence being used as a weapon of war. This exhibition was not recommended for children under the age of 16, and those who were under the age of 12 were not allowed to enter the exhibition. The exhibition provided a small interactive learning centre within the space, to allow the visitors to explore the histories of instances of genocide and ethnic violence (IWM exhibition archive, 2018).

The film started with a historical background exploring the dramatic increase in casualties among civilians in the twentieth century. During WWI 90% of the deaths took place on the battlefield with soldiers, but these numbers dramatically changed by the end of the century, where 90% of the fatalities were civilians. Since the 1990s, ethnic wars have taken a new path where civilians have become the main target of conflict, in the purpose of creating new states with homogeneous populations (IWM exhibition archive, 2018). The increased killing rates among civilians was a result from fanaticism and new technologies, as well as the role of mass propaganda of audio and visual media in dehumanising 'the others'.

The first theme was entitled '*Lives Threatened*' and looked at how genocide can be justified by ideologies and politics, presenting examples of Nazi-Germany, the Stalin case and the Ottoman Empire. This theme also looked at different aspects that can cause genocide, such as economic depression and the resulting poverty, which can encourage poor people to blame others, as was the case in Rwanda. Also, the genocide could be the result of colonising remote areas and killing isolated tribal people. Then, the theme showed an interview with a Tutsi survivor of the Rwandan genocide, talking about how close friends and neighbours had changed and turned against them (IWM exhibition archive, 2018).

The next theme '*Perpetrators*' considered the justification for genocide, and how people can come up with different reasons to justify the killing of their friends, neighbours, and sometimes their loved ones. This theme gave the example of the killing of cultural minorities and those who resisted the regime in Cambodia. The theme went on to explore how perpetrators are confident and certain that they are committing such crimes for a good cause, giving examples of the German Holocaust and the Serbian atrocities. The theme concluded by pointing out that everyone is capable of committing such crimes and that it is not specific to particular nations. This theme provided some interviews with imprisoned Hutu killers who participated in Rwandan genocide (IWM exhibition archive, 2018).

The third theme entitled '*How the world responds*' explored the comments of the world's leaders, historians, and staff from the UN condemning the extermination of people. It explored the acts of indifference which indirectly permits genocide to happen, and how the UN did not respond properly to these crimes, especially those concerning Bosnia and Rwanda. The next theme '*Trial and Punishment*' dealt with the accusations of genocide. This theme started with the history of the Nuremberg Tribunal, which has a legacy of recognising crimes against humanity. Lamentably, this Tribunal was not prompted in to action until the conflicts of Rwanda and Yugoslavia took place (IWM exhibition archive, 2018).

In this theme, one commentator discussed wartime rape, saying that the first time rape was considered a genocidal crime was during the Rwandan genocide, when women were repeatedly raped as a means of humiliating them and their male relatives. The rape

was deliberately carried out with the purpose of infecting the women with AIDS, which psychologically would destroy their community. To discuss the issue of rape further, this theme provided an interview with a Bosnian rape victim, who said that each guard would pick a woman to abuse her, and that she was chosen by the Head of Security at the camp. At the start, the guard would beat the woman and then rape her. The last theme, entitled 'Aftermath', tackled the importance of generating factual knowledge about what really happened. It also discussed the difficulties of creating such a history, when part of the population are the perpetrators of the genocide (IWM exhibition archive, 2018).

This exhibition focused on the subject of the perpetrators in genocidal war, showing the real impact of conflict on civilians, and the importance of finding solutions for peace. It provided a critical discussion of war and the devastating impact of weapons. It was more balanced in introducing the victims, the perpetrators and the reasons for genocide, which can help the visitor to understand this issue from different angles. The exhibition purposely discussed the subject of wartime rape which cannot be ignored when tackling the topic of genocide. The IWM showed its ability to tackle these topics notably in temporary exhibitions. Whilst the issue of the Bosnian genocide was not discussed in the permanent exhibition (see Chapter 5) the museum is perhaps more comfortable showing challenging subjects in its temporary exhibitions. This exhibition dared to talk openly about both survivors and perpetrators, providing a balanced and nuanced perspective of genocide. However, this ease and openness with which the museum discusses the subject of genocide might be attributed to the fact that these stories are from a distance and related to the other perpetrators. As the perpetrators involved were not those of British soldiers, the image as hero is not disputed.

4- Eleven Women Facing War

Eleven Women Facing War was a photographic exhibition by Nick Danziger which was held at the IWM in 2016. The photographer started this project in 2001 by travelling to different conflict zones around the world and taking pictures of eleven women (IWM press release, 2016). This project was part of a study by the International Committee of the Red

Cross (ICRC) with the purpose of recording the needs of women living in conflict zones. After ten years, the photographer went back to find the same women, to see how their lives had changed. The exhibition was based on 33 photographs taken by Danziger, and 33 short films (IWM press release, 2016). The first set of photographs - black and white portraits of women - was taken by the artist in 2001 (Blair, 2016). The other set were colour photographs of the same women taken 10 years later, allowing the viewer to engage with the changes in these women's lives over this 10 year period (Blair, 2016). This exhibition covered eight conflict zones from places around the world including Bosnia, Kosovo, Israel, Gaza, Hebron (West Bank), Sierra Leone, Columbia and Afghanistan (IWM press release, 2016).

Through these photographs the exhibition explored the difficult experiences of these women, including the story of an orphaned 10 year old Afghani girl. She was responsible for caring for her two younger brothers after losing their mother who died giving birth to the youngest child and her father had disappeared (IWM exhibition archive, 2018). The children were struggling to stay alive, as no one helped them, and even their neighbours and relatives abandoned them. The girl sold her father's animals in order to survive, but she lost everything when the war forced them to flee their home. The girl was not allowed to receive food aid, because she was a minor, so the children were eating grass to survive. After 10 years, the photographer went back to find out what happened to this girl, but he was unable to find any information about her. After a long search, he found out that the girl got married and then died at age 16, in 2006. One of her brothers had also died, and the fate of the other one was unknown (IWM exhibition archive, 2018). Each story showed the struggle different women experienced and all had seen dramatic changes in their lives because of these wars.

Other stories had a better ending as the story of a woman from Sierra Leone reveals. She was 15 when the civil war reached her home where her fiancé, father and four brothers were executed. She was captured by the rebels who made her a sex slave and she was repeatedly raped. As a result, she fell pregnant and the rebels left her in the jungle. The photographer met her at a centre for former underage sex slaves. At the time, her child was two years old, and she was training to be a hairdresser, but still mourning the loss of her

murdered fiancé. After 10 years, the photographer found her married and had become the mother of a second child. Her husband met her at the centre, and since then he worked hard to convince his family to allow him to marry her, as they had some reservations regarding her past. She was happy with her family, but still seen as a pariah by her village, which prevented her from returning home (IWM exhibition archive, 2018).

This exhibition showed the hidden and devastating impact of war on women and girls, as the photographer had succeeded in showing the moments of sadness and happiness through journey of 10 years of these women's lives (ICRC, 2016). The stories of these eleven women served as evidence of the horrors of war, showing the strength and the power of the human soul (ICRC, 2016). This exhibition was a reminder of the vulnerability of these women who got caught in the middle of war, and faced all kinds of horrors, such as 'rape, forced prostitution and other forms of sexual violence' (ICRC, 2016). In addition, they also experienced the sadness of losing their family members and separation from their loved ones (ICRC, 2016). Each story showed different aspects of suffering during conflict, experienced by people who have nothing to do with these wars. The museum broke its silence on atrocities committed against women, including sexual violence. They achieved this using artworks to convey the stories of horror, showing simple portraits of different women, who shared the same vulnerable position in conflict zones. This exhibition lasted for three months only. As we can see, the museum does have the capacity to hold such exhibitions on challenging and difficult subjects, but currently this practice appears to be minimal .

According to Roberts (2017), Danziger's project was very important in terms of showing that women from all regions of the world, some who were fighting and some who were innocent bystanders, and some of who supported the cause, suffered the consequences of war. This was a body of work commissioned by the International Red Cross to look at how women in particular became targets and suffered during conflict (Roberts, 2017).

6.3 Discussion

Throughout this chapter, it was apparent that temporary exhibitions at the IWM could be employed to break the silences on issues related to the impact of war on civilians, including atrocities and acts of violence, injustice, suffering and anti-war movements. Thus, these exhibitions filled the gaps that are in the permanent galleries, by providing counterbalanced content and beginning to break some of the silences that persist. As a consequence, the temporary exhibitions employ all forms of art to convey a moving and provocative image of war which can play a crucial role in engaging visitors with the stories of others or themselves. For instance, in the '*Age of Terror*' exhibition, the museum exhibited thought-provoking artworks focusing on the difficult experiences of civilians such as the issue of torture in Abu Ghraib prison and the Guantanamo detention camp. Moreover, the temporary exhibitions looked critically at the issue of genocide and wartime rape through the '' and '*Eleven Women Facing War*' exhibitions. All temporary exhibitions covered by this research showed the museum's willingness and commitment to break its silence regarding difficult subjects.

However, whilst these exhibitions showed how the IWM can begin to tackle the issue of war critically, they do, to some degree, censor these exhibitions by interfering and attempting to make amendments to interpretive text drawn up by artists. This is most apparent with the artworks by Peter Howson and Simon Norfolk where their perspectives or artworks incited some friction and discord from the museum itself. Thus, the museum sought to have full control over their own exhibition content in order to avoid any likely controversy. By doing so, the museum curators try to actively prevent any negative impact that might result from exhibiting certain subjects. Therefore, as Steiner states, they 'take[n] pre-emptive measures of self-censorship' (2011: 399). Self-censorship can manifest in removing specific objects such as Howson's painting or in altering the narratives like the issue of the Dresden photograph in Norfolk's case. Nonetheless, the museum still provides critical content in these exhibitions which are not seen to the same extent in their permanent galleries. Still, these exhibitions can be seen as extensions or a continuation of some of the stories presented in the permanent galleries. Examples includes the '*War of Terror*', and '*Age of Terror*' temporary exhibitions which covered the same topic as the '*Peace and*

Security' permanent exhibition, but with a rather different and more critical point of view which highlighted the impact of war on civilians and human rights.

It is noteworthy that human rights related issues were only discussed in the museum's temporary exhibitions. This might be due to space limitations in the permanent exhibition. Or, it could be due to the nature of the topics addressed, which in some cases could spark some controversy, or might be distressing for some people such as young children. Or simply because it contradicts the 'familiar' narrative of war. However, this chapter has demonstrated that these concerns could be tackled by employing creative ways of representation, as successfully done in the exhibition '*Eleven Women Facing War*'. The IWM approach in its temporary exhibitions are similar to that of human rights organisations, and the UK Foreign Office summit to stop sexual violence against women in conflict zones, which is highlighted in Chapter 7. The similarities were in terms of using the same modes of representation such as artworks, films and documentaries, conferences, installations to discuss the issues of human rights violations. For example, the '*Bosnia*' exhibition commissioned Howson's paintings to convey images of war and its impact on the people. Similarly, the '*Eleven Women Facing War*' effectively told the stories of women who had suffered from different wars in different parts of the world, through exhibiting their personal photographs. Therefore, exploring different approaches that the IWM has employed in their temporary exhibitions demonstrates how the IWM is taking a human rights position in its representations of the effect of war on people.

In terms of museum silences, the examples above have shown that temporary exhibitions do break the IWM silence on the devastating impact of war by conveying stories of those who suffered the consequences of war. For example, the '*War of Terror*' and '*Age of Terror*' exhibitions did highlight war crimes against civilians, in the name of fighting terrorism, which was not explored in the permanent galleries. Also, the '*Syria story of Conflict*' and '*A lens on Syria*' exhibitions shows that the museum is explicitly condemning war atrocities against civilians by drawing attention to the tragic stories of refugees and images of destruction of their homeland. In a similar vein, the '*People Power Fighting for Peace*' exhibition discussed the anti-war movements throughout the 20th century, which, notably was highlighted in some of permanent exhibitions but to a lesser

extent. Here, the museum illustrates its capability in tackling difficult topics related to human rights violations in war. Though, as explained by Roberts (2017) in Chapter 5, these kinds of subjects were only shown in controlled spaces such as temporary exhibitions.

Temporary exhibitions had a propensity to break museum silences on difficult subjects. It was noticeable that the images of perpetrators in confrontation with victims was to some extent absent. The exhibitions did focus on the stories of the victims and the survivors of war, but the perpetrators of such crimes were not fully explored or examined. For example, in the exhibitions of the Syrian civil war, the perpetrators were to some extent absent. The exhibitions did discuss the role of the Syrian government in destroying cities, but the role that world governments played in bombing the same cities was categorically absent. This could be understood as an issue of self-censorship to avoid any potential controversy given that some Western governments are involved in this ongoing war. Likewise, the exhibitions of the war on terror did not mention anything about the soldiers who committed war crimes against civilians in both Iraq and Afghanistan. And, the silences in temporary exhibitions also encompasses, to some degree, the stories about perpetrators committing crimes against civilians. Taking such an approach can, in some ways, mitigate the aggressors' violent actions. Thus, it is not enough to only show how war can negatively impact the lives of people, but, it is important to talk about the causes, and who committed these war crimes. Choosing parts of history and neglecting others does not provide a truthful image of all aspects of war. Therefore, talking openly about perpetrators can provide a better understanding of war crimes against civilians, in particular women, who represent the most targeted groups in conflict zones. Whilst these matters are important, it is likely that factors which might contribute to silence is the limitations of the temporary galleries space, or indeed a lack of exhibition materials.

Overall, it is clear that the museum was not comfortable with the topic of perpetrators and wartime rape. Thus, these can be considered as a form of silence that can be linked to the temporary exhibitions. These silences are related to the hidden figures of the perpetrators and their violence, and to topics that can provoke controversy. Indeed, the viewer can learn what happened to civilians but yet the perpetrators remain ambiguous. Who are they? Why did they do this? And were they convicted?

In another context, however, the Bosnia exhibition was not meant to be about wartime rape, but the museum accepted to exhibit the artist's choice of works which included graphic paintings of rape and violence. This signifies that the museum can be open to exploring critical views about war in its temporary exhibitions. The museum did not receive any negative attention which signifies that the public is open to discussing sensitive subjects related to war crimes and atrocities against women. The topic of wartime rape was seldom covered by the IWM. In spite of the considerable coverage of sexual violence against women in the media, war museums continue to neglect this subject, except on the few occasions when they decide to present it in their temporary exhibitions.

Regarding the representation of the topic wartime rape in the museum, Roberts (2017) suggests that museums need to look at this topic and devise and think about the possible ways of handling it, and the ways in which museums could engage with that subject appropriately. Talking about artworks as an effective tool of interpretation, Roberts (2017) stresses that there have been some extraordinary artworks which can provide insight and can make the visitor think profoundly about this challenging subject. As conveying something of this nature, is very difficult in term of its impact on the individuals. However, some cases of wartime rape still need evidence, the challenge for the museums these days is that they deal with a visual society who are less inclined to read long text (Roberts, 2017).

Chapter 7- Conclusion

Overall, the main goal of this research was to gain an understanding of museum silence on the subject of wartime rape against women using the IWM as a case study for research. While this topic has been widely researched in law, history and feminist studies, it is understudied within the field of museum studies and virtually invisible in museums. Therefore, this research employed a qualitative approach to help provide a comprehensive understanding of this complex issue of violence against women in conflict zones and its lack of representation in museum settings. This chapter discusses silence on the subject of wartime rape in museums by answering the research questions. The first question that this research posed was:

7.1 Why is this topic important and why it should be addressed in museums?

Sexual violence against women in war and conflict has been widely practiced throughout history, and usually exercised as a weapon of war. Such violence against women not only causes pain for those who survived it but family shame and their communities. It denotes a crucial part of the history of war. As a consequence, museums should pay attention to this issue when they discuss the history of war. This is more important now so that awareness amongst the public regarding human right issues is promoted. The 20th century has witnessed a dramatic increase in civilian casualties of war, most of them women and children (Seifert, 1996: 38, Hynes, 2004: 436). According to Hynes (2004: 436), in the 20th century, war has become more about targeting civilian populations as well as the infrastructure of their cities and their economy.

War was historically identified as combat between armed men, which had nothing to do with sexual desire. Such battles and fights were about the aggressors acquiring new territories and controlling material resources and goods, and the other party (the weaker) fight to avoid sexual violence and to defend their land and themselves (Gaca: 2011, p.77). According to formal military records, the rape of women during war is no more than a general attack on the civilian population, and such records do not address the intensity of

the sexual violence on women. Instead, such attacks are considered as unfortunate, unavoidable, and secondary (Seifert, 1996, p.38). Victims figures in this century gives a completely different view, because most casualties worldwide are women and children, which indicates that it is not a mere fight between men, but rather that it is a systemic operation against women (Seifert, 1996, p.38). The topic of rape in conflict is a complex one; it is a sensitive subject due to its political, social, religious, moral and legal implications. There is international agreement that rape in conflict bears a stigma in human history. It has been widely and repeatedly condemned by the United Nations Department of Human Rights and all social and religious institutions. Yet, rape continues to be perpetrated by soldiers and other fighters in conflict zones around the world. The media has raised awareness that rape in conflict is more widely practiced than previously claimed by government officials. Consequently, human rights groups continue to highlight this crime and to promote greater awareness and invite more people to join in their efforts to condemn and stop this shameful act.

Today, social media and human rights groups are making the voices of rape victims more resonant. The repeated denial of governments and their officials that their soldiers have committed rape, may, in large part, be due to social sensitivity and legal consequences. Indeed, if they did admit that soldiers used rape as a weapon of war, this could damage the moral image and reputation of their armies, and in addition could hold them accountable through legal prosecution and trial. Human rights violations are prevalent worldwide and come in different forms, including forced labour and sexual exploitation as well as the degradation of indigenous people, women, immigrants and various minorities. Due to the prevalence of these violations, there is a need to address such issues publicly in museums (Fleming, 2012, p.252). Fleming (2012, p.252) and Carvill (2010, p.1) indicate that museums now are exceeding their traditional role as places of preserving, displaying and documenting collections and now play a more profound and meaningful social role. They have become increasingly involved with social issues concerned with equality and justice. In turn, there is added responsibility placed on museums to explore ideas relating to contemporary life (Fleming, 2012, p.252).

Although, museums are facing great challenge in changing its classical functions (collecting, preserving and exhibiting objects) due to the rise of awareness of new generation (Macdonald, 2009, p.2). Museums need to rise to this challenge and take part in transforming our society by encouraging thoughts and ideas to find solutions to conflict not through war. With the younger generation changing viewpoints, and the rise of human rights concepts and activists, museums have no logical reason to shy away from tackling this topic. Professionals in war museums have a moral responsibility to avoid glorifying war (Winter, 2012, p.159). It is important to note that the global summit to end sexual violence in 2014, and the ‘fighting stigma through film’ in PSVI Film Festival in 2018 (see below examples), which both lasted for a few days drew in a limited number of largely specialist visitors. Museums are in a unique position as they provide greater access and inclusion which makes them ideal institutions to draw attention to this subject and contribute in increasing public awareness on this subject (Fleming (2012, p. 252).

Sandell (2006, p.6) points out that global political orientations may shift the role of museums with great emphasis given to issues of social equality and human rights. For instance, by responding to political and social demands and changing generational view, museums have addressed subjects such as war and genocide and other human rights-related topics since the 1980s and have thus provided knowledge and in some cases encouraged social activism (Carter and Orange, 2012, p.111). If so, then the political position of the UN, world governments, and the British government towards wartime rape, and their demands to end the violence against women, should, in principle, influence museums to be proactive and cover this topic. Museums are often regarded as the best spaces to empower individuals by addressing social issues and human rights violations. Over time, the role of the museum has evolved from a representation of memories to encouraging ‘activist practices’ (Carter and Orange, 2012, p.111). The concern with the human rights has widely spread since the 1950s. That was shown not only through political conventions on the international level, but also through encouraging participation of ‘oppressed groups’ to discuss topics related to ‘disadvantage and discrimination’ (Janes and Sandell, 2019, p.6). Similar to approaches taken by the Global Summit to end Sexual Violence against women in conflicts zones, who invited rape survivors to talk about their devastating experience of

war (see section 7.3). Wartime rape constitutes a vital part of the history of war according to feminist and law studies, but has lamentably been overlooked by historians and cultural institutions. Thus, this research explored the potential for war museums to address sexual violence against women in conflict zones. By investigating the IWM's permanent and temporary exhibitions it is patent that this subject is important and the museum can play a vital role in highlighting this subject as well as raising awareness regarding human rights violations.

7.2 Discussion

This section answers the research questions set out in Chapter 1 (see page 18) and presents the findings from the case study of the IWM. This research sought to investigate silences on the subject of wartime rape in the museum's permanent and temporary exhibitions.

1- Why do war museums not discuss this topic explicitly in their exhibitions?

Looking at the extensive literature tackling war museums, in particular the work by Jay Winter (2012), who investigated the representation of war through surveying European war museums, pointed to museums being sites which existed to honour the men and women who endured the horrors of war and the sacrifice they gave for their country. Therefore, these museums predominantly exhibit weapons and airplanes as a central theme and tend to tell stories about soldiers and battlefields. Its purpose is to attract younger visitors, such as the school children. Thus, the exhibitions avoid displaying or discussing the horrors of war and mutilated bodies of soldiers (or civilians). However, war museums started to address the issues of civilian victims at the end of the 20th century, due to the importance of the Holocaust as a main feature of WWII.

These museums are still not politically neutral, because of their continuous focus on the conduct of war and its politics, whereby subjects related to victims of war or anti-war movements are afforded smaller exhibition space. War museums tend to function as memorial sites for soldiers, to determine social identity through honouring them (Winter, 2012, p.152). Thus, the victims and survivors' stories could undermine the heroic image of

soldiers, and open discussions about war crimes and accountability for these crimes. For example, in the IWM permanent exhibition '*Peace and Security*' which discussed the circumstances that led to the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, the exhibition placed greater importance on the advanced weapons employed, and political issues, acknowledging the soldiers suffering and sacrifice. However, this exhibition only marginally focused on the anti-war protests and the impact on civilians. War crimes against civilians such as the rape of Abeer al-Janabi and the sexual abuse against detainees in the Abu Ghraib prison was not mentioned whatsoever. So, in this sense the museum staff here might choose not to discuss certain stories to maintain the heroic image of the American and British soldiers. In doing so, the museum staff could be self-censoring in order to avoid any potential controversy by eliminating any stories related to soldiers' bad conduct (Steiner, 2011, p.399). However, the limitation of the exhibition space or lack of resources could be another reason why aspects of the story were not exhibited. Ultimately, however, curatorial preferences and choices will determine what is displayed and what is not.

Likewise, the subject of wartime rape was not tackled or presented in the permanent exhibitions at the IWM. For instance, the WWII gallery discussed the Japanese invasion of a number of Asian countries but did not explore the well-known issue of 'comfort women'. In addition, the systemic rape against women in the Balkan's war, which motivated the UN to consider wartime rape as a crime against humanity was not highlighted in the '*Peace and Security*' permanent exhibition. This could be due to the exhibition's focus on UK military engagement with different events of the wars, which is a dominant approach in the museum, thus, keeping the 'familiar' narrative in place to meet visitor expectations (see also Chapter 5) Due to the sensitive nature of the subject of wartime rape this might not be considered as suitable content for younger viewers as noted by Roberts (2017). Or, this topic might raise controversy, such as the example of the painting by Peter Howson.

The research findings from this case study Suggests that wartime rape is silenced in the Imperial War Museums, due, in part, to self-censorship in order to avoid controversy and most likely due to the sensitive nature of this subject. Or, as demonstrated throughout this research, the need to provide evidence of these incidents as noted by Roberts (2017). The silence stems from the IWM's propensity to glorify war, with a clear focus on concepts

such as patriotism, soldier's heroism and suffering, the politics of war and the advancement of weapons technology which underpins notions of national identity and solidarity. Therefore, exhibiting the subject of wartime rape could distract from the notion of patriotism and the function of a war museum as a memorial site.

2- Through careful analysis of the IWM permanent galleries: How do war museums silence wartime rape in their permanent displays?

The IWM represents wars starting from the 20th century until the present day, therefore, this research sought to investigate the occurrence of wartime rape during this specific period of war history and to understand to what extent (if at all), wartime rape was represented in the IWM's permanent galleries. Therefore, six permanent exhibitions at the museum were examined. This research concludes that these spaces are predominantly focusing on the war effort rather than the experience of civilians and in particular women. For example, in the WWI gallery the museum the emphasis was overwhelmingly related to themes on political leadership, the politics of war, the advancement in weapons technology, the soldiers suffering and their sacrifice, recruitment of army personnel, and women's supporting roles. Women were recognised as patriotic and willingly supported the war effort by taking on men's roles at the home front. Nonetheless, the role of soldiers and political leaders were afforded greater emphasis in this exhibition. The stories about survivors and victims was largely absent. Yet, these stories were to some degree on a few introductory panels in order to explain the reasons that lead to war. So, the victims were introduced as a number of casualties on these text panels. Regarding wartime rape however, there was an historical document which recorded incidents of sexual violence against women in one display. This document was poorly presented with no label, and it was hard to read, which indicates that this subject might not have been as important in this exhibition. In general all the themes assumed a patriotic approach. Therefore, this exhibition was functioning more like a memorial site for those who supported the war effort, which makes it particularly challenging to present stories on the subjects of rape victims or civilian casualties.

The same approaches were employed in the WWII main gallery with a particular focus on weapons and politics. However, the exhibition to some extent talked about the victims of war and civilian casualties. However, the subject of comfort women which was practiced by the Japanese military was not discussed in this exhibition. This exhibition was primarily focused on British military actions and advancement in different battles. The family in the wartime exhibition did cover stories of British families during the Blitz which sought to illustrate the ways in which they endured the war, with emphasis on the role women played in supporting the war effort. It was also emphasising the concept of patriotism and courage. In contrast, the Holocaust exhibition took a different approach by focusing predominantly on the victim's stories. This exhibition explained the causes that led to genocide and included moving stories about survivors, which also allowed a critical discussion about the consequences of war on civilian populations. War museums tackle the issues of the Holocaust given the scale of the genocide against the Jewish population. This, in turn, constitutes a crucial component of WWII (Winter, 2011, p.157). In this exhibition, two pictures depicted an almost naked women who had just been raped, showing the horror on their face. It was difficult to look at these pictures. So, I decided not to include these pictures in this research as I strongly believe that no woman would want to be seen by the public in her weakest moment. This decision could be considered as a moment of self-censorship. The museum can use other modes of representation in showing this issue, which will be detailed in section 7.3 (and previously considered in Chapter 6).

The last exhibition '*Peace and Security*' explored different wars starting after the end of the WWII to the present day. This exhibition paid considerable attention to the development of weapons technology especially nuclear bombs. Likewise, this exhibition was similar to the other permanent exhibitions in terms of concentrating on the war effort. However, this exhibition did discuss the Balkan's War but failed to talk about the systematic rape against women, which was widely perpetuated in this war.

Again, the museum to some extent glorified war with a focus on concepts of patriotism. Representation of wars in this museum follows a display hierarchy symbolising: i) the politics of war and the political figures with an emphasis on leadership and patriotism; ii) weapons and their technological advancement to highlight the notion of power, pride and

distinction; iii) soldiers strength, suffering, sacrifice and patriotism during war; iv) women as supporters of the war effort, with a focus on their contribution, sacrifice and patriotism. It was not only the subject of wartime rape that was silenced in these exhibitions, but, to some extent, the victims of war among civilian populations.

3- To what extent were they able to discuss this topic?

Museums, according to Mason and Sayner (2019, p.11), could be more open to discuss difficult topics in their temporary exhibitions. In doing so, they often commission artists to represent difficult or controversial topics from different perspectives. This is precisely what the IWM did to break its silences regarding the atrocities of war on the civilian populations. At the outset of IWM's foundation in 1917 they commissioned artists to accompany the British troops to the battlefields, in order to record the images of war. During my fieldwork at the IWM, I studied five temporary exhibitions all of which exhibited artworks by commissioned artists. I also investigated the museum's archive of previously held exhibitions from the 1990s onwards. Given that the UN declaration that all forms of sexual violence in conflict zones is a crime against humanity was adopted, I wanted to determine how the IWM responded to this subject (if at all). The exhibitions which took place tackled wars from a critical point of view, with a special concern on the impact of war on civilians and the issues of human rights violations. The artworks in these exhibitions were employed to understand the war from the artist's point of view. Strikingly, this approach was more engaging and explored in-depth the civilian's experiences of war by taking a humanitarian approach.

Nonetheless, the subject of wartime rape was not represented in these exhibitions. For example, the exhibitions of the Syrian civil war did not mention that many women were raped by the government's army and by opposition militants. Despite this, the exhibitions provided provocative artworks which described the atrocities against civilians. However, the perpetrators of these horrific acts were to some extent absent in these exhibitions. This suggests that the museum wants to avoid any negative notions of the soldiers. Other issues have appeared in the museum archive of past exhibitions where an artwork about wartime rape was excluded from the museum collection. From these

examples it can be understood that the museum is censoring its temporary exhibitions, and the artist was not given complete artistic freedom to express their opinions. Nevertheless, war time rape was discussed in previous exhibitions, but, it is silenced to some extent in the temporary exhibitions at the IWM.

4- What other spaces, forms or medium are used by the museum to engage with this topic?

In the IWM's permanent exhibitions the subject of atrocities against women and civilians was not discussed in detail but briefly referred to in some text panels. The atrocities against women, in particular wartime rape, was silent in all the permanent exhibitions, except for the two photographs in the Holocaust exhibition (mentioned above). Thus, the permanent exhibitions were devoted to British military involvement in different wars.

In terms of temporary exhibitions at the IWM a greater emphasis to explore different points of view was apparent. Thus, violence against women was to some extent was highlighted in these exhibitions. Notably, however, the subject of sexual violence against women was only covered by three exhibitions since the 1990s. Thus, it can be understood that this subject was one which the museum was comfortable in addressing in their permanent galleries or temporarily in its exhibitions.

5- What other spaces, forms or mediums are used by the museum to engage with this topic?

The IWM has exhibited a range of artworks throughout its different galleries. All of which was produced by official war artists since its opening a century ago. In the permanent exhibitions of the IWM some historical paintings were employed to convey classical scenes from different battles of WWI and WWII. Artworks exhibited images of soldiers in the battlefield, hospitals, nurses, and civilians from the home front. Contemporary artworks were displayed in the '*Peace and Security*' permanent exhibition. For instance, one of the artworks was in the form of a sculpture of a person who had been burned by a nuclear bomb thus expressing the artist's concerns about the dominance of nuclear armament.

The temporary exhibitions presented contemporary artworks which acted to criticise atrocities against civilians, and to provide different perspectives of the war to raise concerns about human rights violations. The artworks took many forms such as, paintings, sculptures, photographs, film, and installations. These artworks were provocative and critical and had the ability to engage the visitor with this difficult topic. For example, in the '*A Lens on Syria*' exhibition, the artist shows the destruction of Syrian cities which skilfully exposes the impact on civilians without showing their actual death. The same approach was taken for the '*Eleven Women Facing War*' exhibition, which talked about the experience of a rape survivor by exhibiting a photograph of her face. The approaches which the temporary exhibitions in dealing with topics related to violence against civilians was similar to the modes of representation at the Global Summit to end the sexual violence against women (see Section 7.3). The museum also organised conferences on this subject and invited experts in the field to discuss contentious and provocative topics such as the conference on '*Art, Terror, and Justice*'. In this regard, it can be said that the museum can tackle the topic of wartime rape using artworks to engage the visitors with this topic and avoid showing images of violence which could be distressing to visitors. As evidenced through its temporary exhibitions, the museum demonstrated that it has the ability to deliver a critical perspective of war.

Winter (2012, p.162) and Roberts (2017) suggest that war museums should find a new way to represent war instead of exhibiting weapons which can be seen as glorifying war (Winter, 2012, p.162). The museum should add next to each weapon images of the destruction and devastation which resulted from its use (Winter, 2012, p.162). Also, the museum should change the gender balance in its exhibition, as women and children were witnesses to war as much as men (Winter, 2012, p.162). Therefore, the museum should trace their stories. It is the museum's duty to represent the aftermath of violence and the atrocities which took place during war so that visitors can begin to comprehend how today has been shaped by the events of the past (Winter, 2012, p.162).

6- How can we research silences around this topic in the museum?

Researching silences on the topic of wartime rape in a museum context was not an easy task. At the start of the research project it was difficult to gain access to museum professionals in order to conduct interviews to understand why there is a lack of representation of this subject. Clearly, staff might have felt uncomfortable in talking to a researcher regarding the sensitivity of this subject. In addition, the silences on the topic of sexual violence against women in conflict zones was not widely explored in the museum context. Thus, this research offers a new methodological approach to researching silence and which factors contribute to it. It brings together visual analysis of the main exhibition spaces and documentary analysis of the archives of past temporary exhibitions to provide the first in-depth investigation of wartime rape in a war museum generally. The original contribution of this thesis lies both in its in-depth study of museum silences and its novel methodological approach, encouraging museums to reconsider their representation of wartime rape against women. In particular, the role of art as an interpretive strategy is highlighted as a potential approach to engaging with these issues.

This research examined the IWM's permanent and temporary exhibitions and applied a visual analysis method as well as thick description of the museum's exhibition content. This method has contributed to understanding how the museum approaches the subject of representation of the history of war. Additionally, through in-depth analysis of the exhibitions content moments of silences on the subject of wartime rape has been revealed. This methodology highlighted the differences between the exhibition approaches in both the permanent and temporary galleries in presenting the history of war. Markedly the museum's approach illustrated how human rights violations in war was dealt with more overtly in its temporary galleries.

The analysis of the archive on previously held exhibition's shows the extent to which the museum dealt with the subject of wartime rape given that during the 1990s the UN acknowledged wartime rape as a crime against humanity.

In relation to the strategic interpretations of wartime rape in a museum context demonstrates that tackling the subject of rape is challenging on several levels which can contribute to the museum's silence. Not least, it is important to consider concerns regarding

the subject's sensitivity and its potential traumatic impact on children, vulnerable or abused visitors, and other age groups and nationalities. Unquestionably this subject is sensitive and displaying it disrupts the familiar narrative of war. The specific narratives which have been presented in schools, films, documentaries, and relatives' stories of war endure. These narratives often focus on national identity and national pride in war. Hence, affording more exhibition space to these traumatic and uncomfortable stories might prompt criticism from museum audiences. Furthermore, addressing stories related to war atrocities against civilians will undermine the heroic image of soldiers and governments which, in turn, could anger veteran's groups or the public. In addition, addressing rape in war necessitates the need for solid evidence according to Roberts (2017). The limitations of space and relevant materials also can play role in silencing this topic in museums galleries. But lastly curatorial choice and decision-making is central to determine what is displayed and how.

Nonetheless, such concerns and limitations should not prevent museums from addressing this topic for several reasons. Rape in war zones impacts the lives of women, girls and their communities. It is widely practiced by soldiers against civilians for political gain. Placing a greater focus on this subject in museums can help to raise awareness and foster a sense of responsibility among society to reject and condemn war violence against civilians. Keeping silent on this subject may prolong its pervasiveness. In relation to the issue of the sensitive nature of this subject and its traumatic impact, we must remember that the subject of rape in conflict has been widely depicted in all forms of media such as TV news, online news and social media, documents and scholarly research. In addition, this topic is related to the current discourse concerning human rights violations during war and conflict. Therefore, vulnerable people and the other group categories might be aware of this topic. Museums can use signage to indicate to visitors that the exhibition contains sensitive content, thus, people can decide whether they wish to enter this exhibition or leave. Looking at the issue of familiar narrative at the museum and audience expectations. It is important to respect different opinions, but it is also important to have balance within the museum's permanent galleries. As discussed above the casualties among civilians especially women and children are much greater than that of the soldiers. Therefore, the museum should equally address all aspects of war including its consequences and impact

on civilians' lives. Evidence of rape is extensive and curators can, if they wish, source materials in documents, films, interviews with victims to confront this subject. Ethical issues surrounding the acquisition of materials, photographs, interviews from rape survivors or victims is possible and their consent would be a prerequisite. So, how can museums justify refraining from addressing this topic? As 'Silence is, among other things, a state in which no one says what everyone knows' (Winter, 2016, pp. 195).

From an ethical standpoint real images of violence against women or other civilians might not be suitable for display in the exhibition as it could be highly sensitive or traumatic for audiences from different age groups and backgrounds. However, the museum could provide innovative ways of discussing difficult subjects ethically without showing distressing and disturbing images as identified in this thesis by exploring the imaginative approaches taken in its temporary exhibitions.

The next sections are looking at different moods of representations that tackled the topic of wartime rape, drawing on the experiences of human rights organisations in cooperation with government, and two different museums who addressed the topic of rape.

7.3 Tracing the representations of wartime rape

After my decision to research museum silences on the topic of wartime rape, I was surprised to find that museums that openly discussed this subject was absent. I did not find any. Through media I discovered two events were being held in the UK which were covering this subject. It was important to follow these events to understand the scale of this issue, what are the latest developments, and how this topic has been covered. In June 2014, the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict was held at ExCel London (British Government, 2014). More than 145 governments participated in this event, in addition to international organisations and NGOs. It was considered one of the biggest international events that focused on wartime rape. Therefore, this summit provided comprehensive information for this research to understand how the issue of wartime rape was tackled officially by the world's governments, and how this can influence museum practice. The aims of the summit were to draw attention to the systemic sexual violence against women in conflict zones, to condemn the use of rape as a weapon of war and to find effective ways

to remove the cultural impunity regarding this kind of criminal behaviour (British Government, 2014). This summit was hosted by the British Foreign Secretary, William Hague, and the Special Envoy of the UN, Angelina Jolie (ExCeL London, 2014). This major event is an indication of how serious the issue of wartime rape is which urged the world's governments to use this conference to find solutions to help women in conflict zones. The summit highlighted the impact of mass rape on communities and revealed how it destroys the lives of both women and men. The summit emphasised that these kinds of atrocities against women must end because the prevention of these criminal acts could lead to 'peace, security and sustainable development' (British Government, 2014). Therefore, perpetrators of these crimes should be held accountable for their actions. This summit was a result of years of hard work by the survivors to make the world pay attention and take note (British Government, 2014). It was important for those survivors to convey their voices to the wider public in order to draw attention to women's suffering in war, and work towards finding solutions. However, this goal might be hard to achieve through one annual summit with few attendees. The British government (2014) has committed to join the efforts of survivors and the UN to respond to this issue, stating that:

every individual has a moral responsibility to speak out – locally, nationally and globally – to demand a change in how the world perceives and responds to these crimes. We owe it to future generations to end one of the greatest injustices of our time.

Ongoing talk on this subject might help in finding solutions since there is widespread awareness around the globe about sexual crimes against women (British Government, 2014). The continued existence from previous wars until the ongoing recent conflicts, for instance, Rohingya and South Sudan (see Chapter 2) means that museums should prudently respond to the issue of wartime rape out of its moral responsibility to call for a serious change in the world's attitudes towards war crimes. When the summit was first announced through the British media, I was keen to visit it, as it was an important opportunity to learn more about this topic from professionals in the field, and it was a rare chance to listen directly to the victims talking about their experiences.

The interpretive elements employed in this summit were similar to those used in museums. To explore the issue of wartime rape, a variety of programmes was offered such as films, panel discussions, documentaries, performances and exhibitions (ExCeL London, 2014). The exhibition offered a range of creative activities, such as paintings, photographs, art installations, text panels and a variety of displays of crafts produced by survivors. All were used to address the issue of wartime rape. For example, the following image (Figure 7.1) from the exhibition shows artworks from a section representing the theme of ‘*AfricanLives*’, which highlighted the courage and flexibility of Congolese women who survived sexual violence committed against them. The purpose was to focus on those women, not only as victims but more as providers of hope for a thriving future in their communities (Exhibition panel, 2014). Taking such an approach in representing wartime rape can be considered as a positive way of tackling uncomfortable topics. It can be employed in museums to explore this topic, because it focuses on the opportunities that can emerge from overcoming traumatic events. For instance, encouraging all communities to reject violence against women, condemning the perpetrators inhuman acts, and empowering survivors by including them in building safe and peaceful societies.



Figure 7.1 Artworks at the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, ExCeL London, 2014, showing the theme ‘*AfricaLives*’. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2014).

In another section, the exhibition showed some photographs of survivors which were taken by different photographers, with labels telling the survivors' individual stories. This mode of representation is common practice in some museums, for instance in war museums which usually commission artists or photographers to convey images from conflict zones (see Chapter 6). Figure 7.2 shows a photograph by Alissa Everett telling the story of a 19 year old woman who was violently raped by a group of militia in front of her family. Not only that but they forced her to watch them killing her family members, then they damaged her eyes so that she would not be able to identify them. As a result of this traumatic event, she was infected with HIV. The label tells us that she was able to get medical care and learn some skills to support herself (Exhibition label, 2014). The photographs show different cases in different geographical areas where women were violently targeted by soldiers, but it also shows how these women have overcome the trauma, and how they inspired and encouraged others. These images successfully showed the horror of war and its impact on women as well as the need to take an ethical stand to condemn such brutal violence and to work towards improving the conditions and laws for those who are trapped in these conflict zones.



Figure 7.2: Photograph by Alissa Everett of a rape survivor, ExCeL London, 2014. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2014).

Non-governmental organisations also participated in the summit, such as ‘Together for girls’ and the ‘Iranian and Kurdish Women’s Rights Organisation’. They provided artworks made by women who faced violence, as well as artworks of other artists who focused on the same topic, exploring the theme of ‘honour’ related to violence and ‘female solidarity’ (Exhibition panel, 2014). The NGO explained through the summit their connection and collaboration with the UN and world governments to provide help and support for survivors. The summit also organised workshops, performances, film screenings, and talks discussing wartime rape, where survivors were able to talk to the public about their experience and their journey of recovery (Figure 7.3, 2014). Other talks were by experts who explained the devastating impact of wartime rape on the women and the whole community (Figure 7.4, 2014). These modes of representations can help the viewer understand the physical and the psychological harms that the survivors faced during and after the sexual violence. For example, in one performance, the speaker provided advice for women on how to deal with wartime rape (Figure 7.5, 2014). On the last day of the summit,

12 June 2014, a group of survivors of sexual violence from Bangladesh stood in front of the summit's entrance covering their mouths with black tape, holding labels stating 'where are Bangladesh rape survivors at this summit?' (Figure 7.6, 2014). This summit was an opportunity to draw public attention to an important topic, showing the real face of war, where civilians are most likely to suffer. This summit successfully addressed the controversial and sensitive subject of rape in conflict (James, 2014). Yet, it is noteworthy that no museums took part in this summit.

It is not clear why there was no presence of any museum at this event, which was largely covered by the media. Museums which are directly concerned with history of war and to some degree human rights were obvious through their absence. This summit told the stories of sexual violence against women, using very similar modes of display which are found in museums, and yet no museum attended the governmental campaign to highlight this issue. If museums were invited but failed to attend this could give the impression that they are not genuinely interested this matter or simply that they did not wish to discuss this subject in a public forum. Compared to the non-governmental and governmental organisations which joined the efforts to draw the world's attention to this issue in collaboration with the UN, museums showed no response.



Figure 7.3 A survivor of wartime rape talking about her experience, ExCeL London, 2014. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2014).



Figure 7.4 One of the talks by experts in the field of sexual violence in war and conflict, ExCeL London, 2014. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2014).

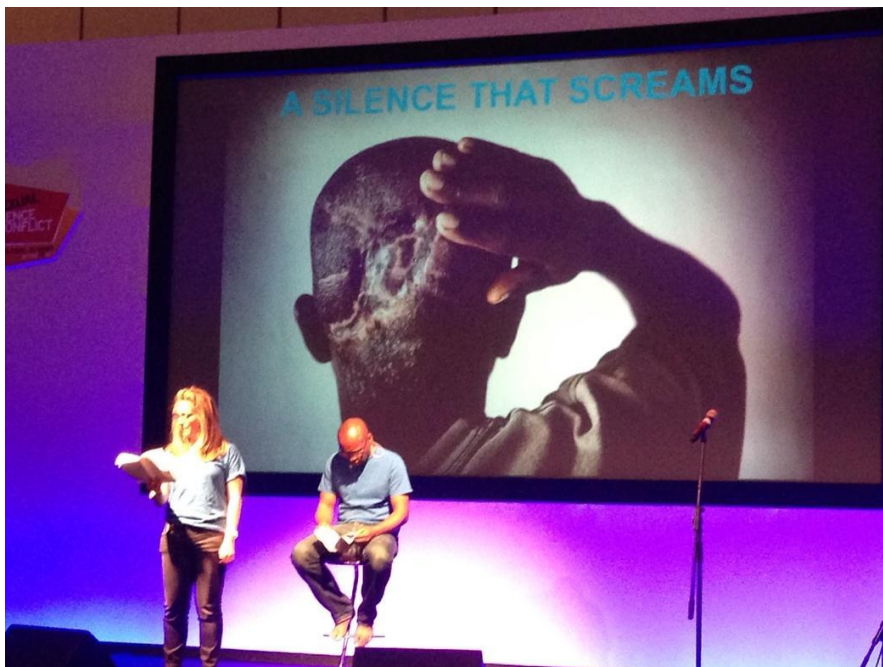


Figure 7.5 Performance related to wartime rape, ExCeL London, 2014. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2014).



Figure 7.6 Groupe of rape survivors from Bangladesh, ExCeL London, 2014. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2014).

Following the governmental campaign to stop wartime rape, I attended another conference on this topic in 2018. My intention was to see the latest developments in tackling this topic, and if there was any involvement of museums. The UK government has taken a clear position in supporting victims of wartime rape. In 2018, the government continued its efforts in supporting survivors highlighting the issue of sexual violence in conflict zones. This was done through an event organised by the Foreign Office, advocating the rights of women who live in conflict zones. As with the previous event, no museum participated in this event or collaborated with the government to deliver this discussion to the wider public. It was the first time that the UK government presented wartime rape through ‘the big screen’ (UK government, 2018), aiming to employ the power of film to expose and reject discrimination against survivors of sexual violence in conflict. The stories of survivors, and people who work with them, was screened through 38 films and documentaries (UK government, 2018). Also, a number of talks, workshops, and an

exhibition were held at the PSVI Film Festival in London in 2018. The event was entitled 'Fighting stigma through films.' Most of the people in attendance at this event were academics who were interested in this topic, journalists, activists who provided support for survivors, volunteers, British military officials, NGOs employees, a few visitors who were seeking employment in human rights organisations, and very few members from the general public. It can be said that the message of this conference could reach a much broader audience if museums were involved in representing this topic. Indeed, museums are publicly more accessible than human rights organisations, thus, audiences might show a positive reaction when they are presented with humanitarian issues (Fleming, 2012: 252).

Compared to the summit that was held in 2014, this event was of a much smaller scale and had fewer visitors. The space was divided into four sections: installations, workshops, marketplace and film screening. In this event, a number of artworks were installed to explore three themes. One of these was 'voice of the survivors', tackling the stigma that survivors of wartime rape face. For example, at one entrance the visitor could see a panel that explained the scale of sexual violence against women between 1991 and 2003 in conflict zones, accompanied with an installation of victim clothes encouraging visitors to listen to a recorded conversation of victim's experience (Figure 7.7 and 7.8, 2018). Another installation was in the form of a ringing telephone, which the visitor could pick up and hear a message from a survivor; the purpose was to emphasise the importance of listening to women who suffered sexual violence in conflict, as these women are usually ostracised by their societies and avoided by their family. Also, they lack adequate support, where the justice system does not work for them (exhibition panel, 2018). The two installations were made by the artist Alpha Foxtrot.

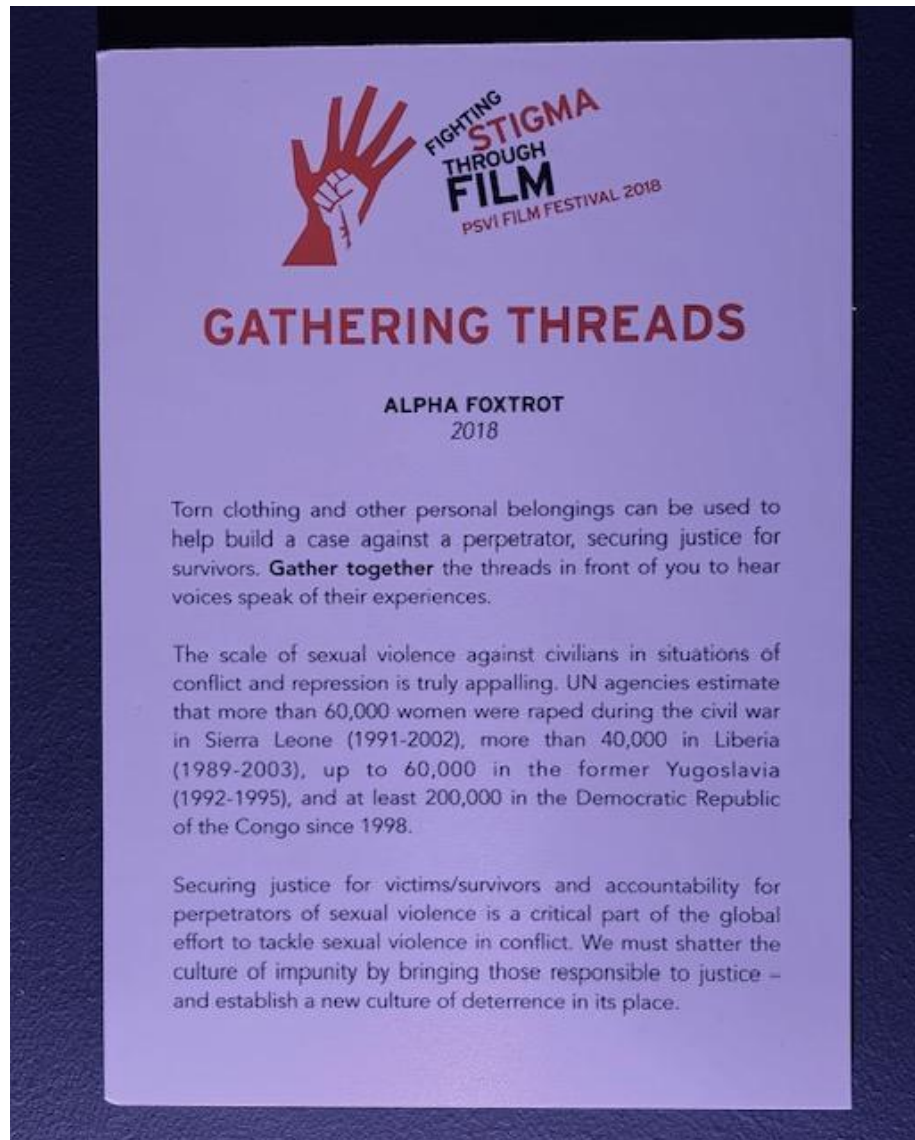


Figure 7.7 A panel illustrating the huge numbers of wartime rape victims, PSVI Film Festival 2018. Source: Author (Almishad, 2018).



Figure 7.8 installation of victim's cloths, PSVI Film Festival 2018. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2018).

In multiple workshops, varied aspects and the latest research regarding sexual violence against women were discussed by experts in the field: academics, representatives from the British Ministry of Defence, and humanitarian organisations (Figure 7.9, 2018). Outside the conference room, space was allocated to a number of stalls, each one representing humanitarian and/or governmental organisations, providing different information for visitors about their work and achievements in helping survivors and refugees, handing out leaflets, printed research, souvenirs, and providing a virtual reality experience. For example, the International Committee of the Red Cross allowed visitors to

experience what can happen to civilian families in war zones using an augmented reality headset (Figure 7.10 and 7.11, 2018). It showed a Syrian family inside their house with the parents peacefully helping their two children do their homework. Suddenly, the voice of violence breaks up this peaceful moment. At this point, the visitor had to choose between two options: either to keep the family hidden inside their house or to let them run. Either way the result was devastating. It was a very profound and realistic experience that exposed the lack of options for civilians in war zones, as it is almost impossible to remain safe, or to be able as a parent to protect everyone from the surrounding dangers. The exhibition and the film screenings showed the human experience in conflict zones, that of suffering, pain, shame, humiliation, sadness, hope and opportunity. These modes of representations can be considered as an effective way of interpreting civilians experience in war zones as it might allow visitors to understand the importance of discussing these kinds of topics; it fits with the aim of finding solutions to end wartime rape as stated by the UK government (2014). These events not only encouraged the audience to interact with the different objects, to imagine what could happen to civilian women in conflict zones, but also allowed them to have their say. Indeed, they could record their voices to contribute to the conversation by sharing their suggestions and ideas with the Film Festival (2018), and through participating in artworks to reject sexual violence at ExCeL London (2014).

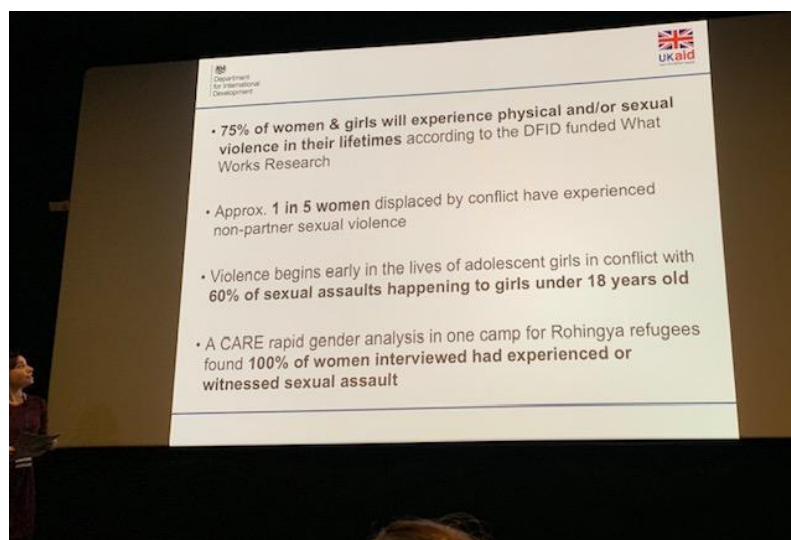


Figure 7.9 Presentation by Kate Latimir, Humanitarian Advisor, DFID, PSVI Film Festival 2018. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2018).



Figure 7.10 'Market place', International Committee of the Red Cross stall, PSVI Film Festival 2018. Source: Author (Almisnad, 2018).



Figure 7.11 'Market place', PSVI Film Festival 2018. Source: Author (Almisnad 2018).

These two events tackled the issue of war from a humanitarian perspective, where civilian experiences were placed in the spotlight, revealing how war can destroy people's lives, and why war crimes should be condemned by all communities. The official orientation of the UK government and the UN was shown through their collaboration, a clear condemnation of wartime rape and a willingness to end this phenomenon, through their focus on the most targeted group in conflicts zones, women (see chapter 2). They used creative ways to address what might be considered a sensitive or controversial topic in the museum context. In museums, war issues are traditionally linked to politicians and military experiences, rather than that of the victims or survivors, and this is due to controversies that might be evoked if museums discuss topics like wartime rape (see Chapter 3). Also, audiences of museums might differ from those who intentionally chose to attend events linked to sexual violence in conflict. However, people now might be more aware of human rights, and all kinds of atrocities that are committed against civilians in conflict zones, through media,

such as TV news, newspapers, radio, online journalism, videos and pictures from different resources. Thus, the modes of representations used in those events can be considered as an effective approach to address wartime rape in museums to create a balanced view of the history of war that covers the experiences of the victims and perpetrators. The next sections are exploring museums representation of the topic of rape.

1- Women's Active Museum on War and Peace

From the beginning of the 2000s Japanese feminist activists were keen to shine a light on the role of the Japanese military during WWII (Enloe, 2016, p.533). Their goal was to raise awareness among Japanese women regarding the involvement of women in the 1930s-1940s, through the military gendered wartime ideology called 'good wife' (Enloe, 2016, p.533). In addition, they wanted to ensure that the government did not succeed in their attempts to deny sexual slavery of 'comfort women' which was committed by the Japanese Imperial Army. The conflicting situation was spark over the Japanese history during WWII, between officials who wanted to militarizing Japan and contribute to other wars abroad, in purpose to regain their international status, and feminist groups who were seeking maintaining the peace constitution (Enloe, 2016, p.533). That conflicting situation can be reflected on the experience of Women's Active Museum on War and Peace detailed below.

Some museums have in fact shown an explicit concern for rape in conflict. The Women's Active Museum on War and Peace (WAM) in Tokyo, Japan, has illustrated and documented sexual crimes against women committed by the Japanese military within the context of 'comfort women' (WAM, 2016; Rumiko, 2007, p.1). Between 1931 and 1945 the Japanese military raped nearly 200,000 women and girls from different occupied territories, the age of many victims was 12 years of age or even younger (Shibasaki, 2012, p.53; Tai, 2016: 36). The women and girls were held in what is known as 'comfort stations', which is usually located not far from the front line and the enslaved women were regularly raped more than thirty times a day (Shibasaki, 2012, p.53). Many of these women were murdered or died from the violent and the extreme conditions, and those who survived were severely affected on both a physical and psychological level, as well as the social stigmatisation in

their own communities (Shibasaki, 2012, p.53). Most of these women came from Korea, China, Taiwan, Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia including Dutch women, Malaysia, and other places (WAM, 2016, and Shibasaki, 2012, p.53). At the end of 2000 a tribunal on Japanese military sexual slavery was constituted by specialists in international law, who came from five continents (held in Japan) (Rumiko, 2007, p.2). This was one of the primary reasons that lead to the opening of WAM. The museum aimed to keep all the records of the 'Women's International Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery', and to honour the women from all countries who were subjected to Japanese military sexual violence (Rumiko, 2007, p.2). Also, the museum aimed to commemorate and preserve that history, acting as a human rights advocate to stop this kind of atrocity against women everywhere, and as a political agent to enhance the relationships between Japan and other Asian countries (Rumiko, 2007: 2).

At the start of the 1990s Kim Hsksoon was the first woman to talk openly about her suffering as a survivor of Japanese military sexual violence. Since then many women have begun to share their stories (Rumiko, 2007, p.2; Tai, 2016, p.36). These women were silenced for 50 years, fearing social stigma, as they came from societies that emphasise the virtue of chastity. Wartime rape has relatively recently been considered as a war crime (Rumiko, 2007, p.2). Rumiko (2007, p.2) suggests that wartime rape keeps reoccurring in all conflicts as a result of the lack of attention regarding this problem and its consequences. The WAM's fundamental principles was to concentrate on survivors' testimonies to avoid gender bias, to hold perpetrators to account through interpretation. This was achieved by representing the military strategies that were adopted during this period regarding 'comfort women', and by promoting a future free from violence through initiating 'action base' that holds meetings and events to provide justice for survivors. The WAM denies any governmental financial support and only collaborates with non-profit organisations such as the Human Rights Foundation for Women's War and Peace. Finally, they seek to create an international movement seeking a future without violence (Rumiko, 2007, p.3). Thus, in terms of education, museums have an important role to play in influencing society and in 'political activism' (Tai, 2016 p.35). When the teaching of 'comfort women' started in Japanese schools in 1997, historical revisionists insisted that those women were sex

workers and had never been sexually abused (Rumiko, 2007, p. 4). Their claims have influenced some people and gained some popularity, even though the museum kept trying to stand up for the victims (Rumiko, 2007, p.3). The museum also has received threatening emails and been harassed by right-wing extremists who deny that history, but that did not stop them from confronting and covering this subject (Rumiko, 2007, p.4; Tai, 2016: 36). The museum wanted to raise awareness regarding sexual violence and to create a 'cross-national and cross-ethnic community across Asia' (Nishino Rumiko is the Director of WAM, 2007, p.5, 6).

The uniqueness of WAM is that it is the first place in Japan that encourages activism, and it is totally 'created and run by women for the sake of women' (Tai, 2016, p.36). That museum provides victims with hope and allowed them to heal inside its spaces. By carrying out this work they were awarded two awards, one from PAX Christi International and the other from the Peace Studies Association of Japan (Tai, 2016 p.35, 36). From the promotion of Empire and Japanese supremacy to accommodating anti-war and peace approaches (Tai, 2016: 35, 36), the change in Japanese museums might reflect their shift in political atmosphere from victory to the defeat in WWII. WAM provides an example by showing how they are capable of representing a difficult past, helping survivors in being acknowledged, and in pushing forward reconciliation efforts despite controversy initiated by right-wing extremists.

2- Women's Museum, Aarhus, Denmark

At the beginning of my fieldwork in May 2017 I travelled to Denmark to interview the director of the Women's Museum in Aarhus, Merete Ipsen, regarding her 2010 exhibition, *It's not your fault*. This exhibition discussed the subject of rape as a sexual assault against women and raised questions about rape prevention and the need to change attitudes to rape, which could help victims to improve their life (interview with Ipsen, 2017). This interview provides a positive example of museum practice that dared to discuss the topic of rape from a feminist perspective, despite any potential social constraints. Such initiatives might contribute to improving women's human rights and in empowering rape survivors by condemning acts of sexual violence. That exhibition presented themes about

rape which is increasingly considered a common act of violence (interview with Ipsen, 2017). The project resulted from cooperation between an organisation dedicated to helping victims of rape which is associated with Aarhus hospital, and the Women's Museum (interview with Ipsen, 2017). Ipsen states that played a crucial role in that exhibition as she organised various meetings with different groups to collect relevant documents for the exhibition. She appreciates that it is the museum mission to focus on problematic issues and then to co-operate with an external partner.

In order to accomplish that exhibition involved organising meetings with rape survivors, Ipsen and external partners. The survivor's role was very important in helping to provide pertinent and appropriate interpretation, as they conveyed their feelings of being a victim of rape and the ways in which they continue their daily life. The museum kept their identities anonymous, because these women have their own separate identity in society which is not that of 'victim' or 'survivor'. This is an inspiring example of how curators and historians can work in collaboration with community members to develop strategies for interpretation, in addition to archival documents and other resources, to demonstrate the ways in which inclusion or exclusion has been manifested (Opotow, 2015, p.231). In relation to any difficulties surrounding the exhibition, Ipsen commented that the exhibition making process proceeded without too many obstacles or challenges, however, unfortunately, the number of visitors was low. As if there was a good TV show documenting difficulty facing other people in other parts of the world, featuring at the evening time, which might not be desirable to watch for some (Ipsen, 2017). Nonetheless, the exhibition proved to be successful in so far as there was wide interest from the press and Ipsen received compliments from visitors over being brave in covering such a difficult subject. Many people prefer to spend their day elsewhere, instead of confronting documentation on sexual violence (Ipsen, 2017). However, she stated these issues will never stop the museum from doing this kind of exhibition. In the same context, (Purbrick, 2011, p.168) states that there was a presumption that documenting atrocities can protect human rights, though, there is a kind of disconnect between exhibiting difficult subjects and supporting human rights to prevent violations. Sometimes, viewing images of human rights violations or suffering at war make visitors feel helpless, careless or bored (Purbrick, 2011,

p.168). Moreover, the museum tends to present exhibitions where the problem has now ended, which, in turn, makes the visitor feel as though there is no possible way to change what has happened as the incident occurred in the past (Purbrick, 2011, p.168).

Thinking about the extent to which the subject of 'sexual violence' is sensitive for some, Ipsen (2017) refutes that this topic is sensitive at all, as she do a serial for high school classes. So, the exhibition could be used as a teaching material, and with more preparation it will also be suitable for school children. Activating museum spaces through education programmes is necessary because viewing by itself is not enough (Purbrick, 2011, p. 168). That exhibitions can influence the society, because it shows stories of brave survivors who re-started their lives successfully (Ipsen, 2017). The main story at the exhibition was presented as a form of interview with a survivor of rape, but without mentioning details about the sexual conduct. So, the narrative was more about what happened before the rape, how she dealt with it afterward and deliberately avoiding any details about the rape itself. The exhibition helped visitors and the relatives of victims to understand the stages of healing of survivors, and how long they needed to recover and live a normal life again (interview with Ipsen, 2017).

On the topic of museum silence on wartime rape, Ipsen (interview, 2017) states that it is easy to claim that it is society who is not willing to listen or look at this subject, but it is a question about the willingness of the museum staff to confront this subject. It is not an easy topic, and it can be done insensitively, thus requiring knowledge and consideration in order to convey the most appropriate message. All museums should have some kind of consciousness concerning human rights and they should be sensitive around the ways in which they present people's lives. In order to deal sensitively with victims so that they can convey their realities and their very personal story, museum staff should endeavour to provide an agency of care for these people. For example, in the exhibition, some visitors become very emotional in the museum, because some of the stories reflected their own personal experience. Therefore, the museum made preparations to refer anyone facing any difficulties to speak with Ipsen who has a background in psychology (Ipsen, 2017). A similar approach of representing peacetime rape was taken by Garberg (2014, p.155) for the purpose of educating young people about sexual abuse. Thus, in 2008 an educational

programme based in Sverresborg Trøndelag Folk Museum, discussed a story from 1888 about a young girl named Minda who had been raped by three men (Garberg, p.156). These examples demonstrate the many approaches which can be adopted regarding sexual violence against women, all of which employs a feminist perspective.

7.4 The topic of wartime rape and the museum credibility

In order to help humanity live a better life, societies need to learn from their past experience and past history (even if that history is difficult or challenging). History is the only reliable source to navigate through our past experience and learn from our mistakes. But, for history to be a reliable and an honest source, it must be reliably and truthfully documented and honestly told. Museums are seen as places and spaces where their credibility and trustworthiness is exploited to present and display history. They have the capacity to transform societies for the better. It is patent from this research project that museums are uncomfortable in exhibiting difficult history, not least wartime rape of women. This disturbing event – wartime rape in conflict - is hugely documented locally and internationally and can be employed in a sensitive manner in a museum to provide a more considered view of history even if it is difficult and challenging both for the museum and the visitor.

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